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A Great Public Character, by M. A. De Wolfe Howe, on page 550

The Saturday Review of Literature

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

VOLUME VII — NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 1931 — NUMBER 27

Sunday at College

THE Harkness Hoot, that most provocative of college magazines, which invented the term "girder Gothic" for the current gargoylism of college architecture, has turned its attention to the college Sunday and the week-end exodus from all campuses, great and small. Its suggestions are picturesque—a brass band morning concert (we hope with little tables) in the quadrangle, church services with some ritual and pomp to them, visiting speakers who can lift the undergraduate mind from its weekday rut, orchestral music, and in general enough excitement to induce by Sunday evening a much needed weekly rest. It does not, one admits, sound like a Cambridge or a New Haven Sunday, and has little resemblance to Herbert's—

> Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright!
> The bridal of the earth and sky.

Yet the picture is not without its attractions, although a brass band in the morning would probably get crockery instead of clapping from the dormitory windows.

The writer of the article in question is gently ironical; even so, he seems to betray some of that dependence of moderns upon noise and rapid movement which psychologists are noting. Can academic dulness be cured by doses of metropolitanism? If the English biographies and studies of Victorianism now appearing are to be trusted, it was certainly not dull in Oxford or Cambridge of the '60s, '70s, and '80s, even on Sundays. Was the reason perhaps the presence of the Victorian don, whose disappearance Mr. Benson and Mr. Wingfield-Stratford and Lord Balfour have all lately deplored?

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They were great scholars, some of those dons, and some were not. They were great men, nationally distinguished some of them (Lewis Carroll, Walter Pater, Matthew Arnold, Benjamin Jowett), and some of them were great men but only local celebrities. It would be difficult to fit them with a general description for they were individual to eccentricity, and Benson in his "As We Were" records almost unbelievable episodes. Yet they had certain traits in common, one of which was a confident assurance in the worth of the intellectual life and the dignity of their profession. They were not to be classified as we classify today—as classicists, chemists, professors of English—but rather as Influences, prejudiced often, pervasive always, sincere, and powerful.

The success of the rusty and often anachronistic educational program of the Victorian period, with its slipshod methods, and blind narrowness, was due, it would seem, almost entirely to these men. They were an educational experience in themselves.

We have such men now, but there is a widespread feeling that, when they are in the universities, they are overburdened by executive work, kept aloof on lecture platforms, or driven into the solitude of research work. It would be more accurate to say that the American desire to educate everybody has made the teacher a slave to his mark book, while the demand for specialization has sharpened the scholar into a keen but exceedingly narrow instrument, which blunts if used for anything but the most specialized operation. Yet the great classicists of the Victorian age dealt in a speciality which could be and often was of a narrowness beside which physics or romance literature seems broad. No, there are other explanations for the dearth of intellectual personalities, one of which may well be that decay of responsibility for life seen steadily, to quote a Victorian don, and seen whole, which began when our colleges went mechanistic at the end of the nineteenth century. A further explanation may be a matter of geography. The Victorian don was a housemate of the undergraduate; he was a presence to a family group, if not always accessible. He was not "the physics prof," but a personality, who lived where he could be seen, and talked where he could be heard.

Perhaps the new house plan which Harvard and Yale are inaugurating will give opportunities for the old kind of contact, and the opportunities will breed or seize upon the men that can use them. It may be that President Hutchins of Chicago is proposing more than an educational simplification when he states that the undergraduate shall come to Chicago, not for four years, but for an education, and be granted a degree when he can prove that he is educated. Men of strong personality, self-confident, and able and willing to make their views prevail against philistines and barbarians, have not been attracted to the American college in recent years. Many, fortunately, have been drafted and held there. They are needed, particularly when they are specialists in life as well as scholars in a narrower field. Our prescription for the college Sunday and the college weekday also, would be a liberal dosage of men of the type of the lost Victorian dons.

Fear

By JULIAN HUXLEY

WHEN I was a boy at school,
I was a coward and a fool;
And fool and coward I have stayed
All these years; I was afraid
Of pain and scornful boys; and then
Afraid of ridicule and men;
Afraid of drawing vital breath;
And I shall be afraid of Death.

This Week

"The Canterbury Tales of Geoffrey Chaucer."
Reviewed by ROBERT K. ROOT.

"Ants," and "The Life of the Ant."
Reviewed by BEVERLY KUNKEL.

"The Religious Background in American Culture."
Reviewed by RUFUS M. JONES.

"Ye Olde Fire Laddies."
Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS.

"Four Contemporary Novelists."
Reviewed by ARTHUR COLTON.

"Rachel Moon."
Reviewed by GLADYS GRAHAM.

John Mistletoe, XXIII.
By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Next Week, or Later

"The Science of Life."
Reviewed by R. S. LULL.

Chaucer in Modern Dress*

By ROBERT K. ROOT
Princeton University

WITHIN the calendar year 1930 have appeared two separate renderings of Chaucer into modern English verse. One is tempted to exclaim, with apologies to Lady Macbeth, "who would have thought the old man to have had so much life in him!" Does it mean that the feverish activity of professional scholars, who have during the last twenty-five years turned the dark lantern of research into every cranny and corner of Chaucer's life and writings, has somehow managed to infect with interest the larger company of non-professional lovers of literature? Or is it rather that there is in Chaucer himself an enduring vitality, and that his "perpetual fountain of good sense," his humanism (I use the word with trepidation!), and his preëminent mastery of the comic spirit peculiarly recommend him to the literary palate of present-day tastes and prejudices? Whatever the explanation, here are two attempts, both by American writers, to make more accessible to the generality of readers the living genius of Geoffrey Chaucer. Last May was published Mr. Frank Ernest Hill's graceful rendering of the Prologue and four of the "Canterbury Tales"; and now we have from the Stratford Press two splendid folio volumes of the complete "Canterbury Tales," whose spacious pages present in parallel columns the original text reprinted (not without inaccuracies) from Skeat and, in bolder type, a rendering into modern verse by Mr. William Van Wyck.

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It is the first absolutely complete translation that has been printed; for it boggles neither at the indecencies of the Miller and the Reeve nor at the protracted prosiness of Melibeus and the Parson. Paper, typography, and design make these volumes a delight to every lover of fine printing; but their greatest distinction lies in the brilliant illustrations of Mr. Rockwell Kent. There are twenty-five full page drawings of the Canterbury pilgrims, besides headpieces and tailpieces aplenty. Particularly memorable are the portraits of the Miller, the Pardoner, and the Wife of Bath. I imagine that many people will buy these volumes chiefly because Mr. Rockwell Kent has so adorned them with his art. One would like to write of them at length; but this is an essay on Chaucer in modern verse, and must concern itself with the translation rather than the illustrations.

It is no new idea that the glories of Chaucer must be reclaimed from the charnel house of a dead and forgotten dialect and made to live again for the modern reader. Chaucer had been "deed and nayled in his cheste" exactly three hundred years when his great successor, John Dryden, undertook to bring him back to life again, dressed up in the modern literary style of the year 1700. In Dryden's free paraphrases of the tales told by the Knight, the Nun's Priest, and Wife of Bath, the original text is now pruned, now expanded or heightened, until little is left except the general conduct of the story. They are fine poems, but barely recognizable as Chaucer, done with "the full-resounding line, the long majestic march, and energy divine" so characteristic of Dryden, and so alien to the more gracious, less insistent manner of their originator.

* The Canterbury Tales of Geoffrey Chaucer, together with a version in modern English verse by William Van Wyck. Illustrated by Rockwell Kent. New York: Covici-Friede. 1930. 2 vols. Limited to 924 copies at $50, and 75 copies at $250.

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In the preface to the "Fables," Dryden justifies what he has done:

> How few are there who can read Chaucer, so as to understand him perfectly! And if imperfectly, then with less profit and no pleasure. 'Tis not for the use of some old Saxon friends that I have taken these pains with him: let them neglect my version, because they have no need of it. I made it for their sakes who understand sense and poetry as well as they, when that poetry and sense is put into words which they understand.

Mr. Hill's contention is almost exactly the same:

> A Chaucer in modern verse, whatever its defects, at least provides accessibility. And I have felt that even with those who have read Chaucer widely (I naturally exclude Chaucerian scholars), he has too often been seen in a blurred and fragmentary fashion.

No one can deny that between Chaucer and the understanding of the modern reader who is not a special scholar there is fixed a very considerable gulf. Curiously enough, the barrier was more formidable in the days of Dryden than it is today. Many of Chaucer's words and phrases which had become completely obsolete two hundred years ago have come back into the vocabulary of modern poetry through the mediation of such writers as Coleridge, Keats, Tennyson, and William Morris. It was not till the publication in 1175 of Tyrwhitt's edition of the "Canterbury Tales" with its revelation of the structure of Chaucer's language, that Chaucer was recognized as a metrist no less concerned with the musical finesse of his lines than was Pope himself. To Dryden his verse seemed to have only "the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune."

But though the gulf which separates us from Chaucer has somewhat narrowed, it is still unluckily true that a really adequate mastery of him is not easy. If it is a simple matter to learn enough of his language to catch the obvious beat of his lines, it is not so easo to recover the subtler beauties of rhythm and texture. Though with a little practice, coupled with good guessing, one can recognize familiar English words in the disguise of an old-fashioned spelling the familiar words may turn out to have an unfamiliar meaning, or to carry a very different con-

though not displeasing, is a complete falsification of Chaucer's art. Spenser deliberately chose a diction and spelling which should have for his own contemporaries the quaint flavor of long ago; Chaucer to his first readers would have seemed completely modern.

Well, what is to be done about it? If Chaucer is one of our greatest poets, it is a thousand pities that he should either not be read at all or seen only "in a blurred or fragmentary fashion." If translation into modern English will do the trick, then blessings on the head of the translator. But will it, and can it?

Every translation of a poetic masterpiece must in the nature of things be a substitution, and so at best a clever counterfeit. Transfusion of its authentic life blood is impossible. A translation of the "Canterbury Tales" may give with approximate truth the subject matter of Chaucer—his plots and his method of ordering them, the manners of his age, his comments on life, something of his images. It may give his jests, though not his humor. The words and rhythm are not Chaucer's but his translator's, even though, as in the translations before us, the metrical pattern is faithfully reproduced. The poetic art of Chaucer resides in that fusion of matter and form into an indivisible unity which is the essence of all artistic creation.

How dead is Chaucer's matter without some approximation to his form, one may see by trying to read the very accurate translation of his complete works into archaic prose, much burdened with "eke" and "prithee," published eighteen years ago by Tatlock and MacKaye. Though still in demand by undergraduates as a device for short-circuiting college requirements, it has made no impression on the great body of intelligent readers for whom it was intended.

Mr. Hill, an accomplished poet in his own right, has given us in graceful verse, pleasantly reminiscent now of William Morris, now of Mr. Masefield, and in a diction free from affected archaisms, a rendering which combines scholarly accuracy and fine poetic feeling. Even though a pale substitute for its great original, it is so readable that one hopes that Mr. Hill will go on and do the rest of the "Canterbury Tales" with equal competence.

I wish one could say as much for Mr. Van Wyck. I have no quarrel with the fact that his translation is often very free; but I question whether the use of ephemeral slang is the best way of exercising a translator's freedom. Here are two short specimens from the "Miller's Tale":

> A silly ass
> Would be the fellow, German, Wop, or French,
> Who would not fall at once for this gay wench.
>
> . . . .
>
> "Now mum's the word or I'll be a dead guy!"
> "Don't worry, kid," the good clerk made reply.

It is in the ribald tales, such as this of the Miller, that the translation is most readable. They are done with vivacity and gaiety. But the "jazzy" vulgarity of phrasing misrepresents the tone of the original. Even when Chaucer's humor is at its broadest and coarsest, and his manner is most colloquial, there remains in his lines that subtle quality of style which marks him as the fastidious artist.

In the more serious tales—and they are the majority—Mr. Van Wyck is much less adequate; when Chaucer rises to higher levels of poetry, his translator, forced to drop his vivacious gaiety, becomes merely dull. Here is what he makes of a striking passage in the "Pardoner's Tale":

> Alas, not even Death will have my life,
> And thus I walk forever, full of strife.
> And on the ground, which is my mother's gate,
> I knock with my staff, early too, and late,
> And say: "Now, mother dear, please let me in.
> Diminished is my flesh and blood and skin.
> When will my bones forever be at rest?"

Failure to catch the appropriate tone is not Mr. Van Wyck's only shortcoming. He has repeatedly failed to understand the passage which he is rendering. Every page bristles with departures from the original which are the result not of freedom in translating, but of inadequate comprehension; and these blunders often play havoc with Chaucer's sense. Side by side in the Prologue stand the sharply contrasting figures of the worldly but highly respectable Monk and the ingratiating but disreputable begging Friar; yet the translator seems to regard the terms "monk" and "friar" as interchangeable, and four times calls

> What sholde he studie, and make him-selven wood,
> Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure?

They are well translated by Mr. Hill:

> For why go mad with studying all day,
> Poring over a book in some dark cell?

But Mr. Van Wyck, misundertanding *wood*, an obsolete word which means "insane," and quite unaware of the fact that it is expected of a monk, but not of a friar, that he spend his days in cloistered study, gives us this:

> Why should a friar be a log of wood,
> Cloistered from life, and reading, praying, fretting?

which misses the point rather seriously.

With blunders like this on every page, it is the more regrettable that so dull and tasteless a translation should have achieved the permanence and dignity of such beautiful typography and design and such brilliant illustration.

A reader who wishes without too much effort to know something about the "Canterbury Tales" may read Mr. Hill's graceful rendering with pleasure and profit. Any one who wishes really to enter the world of Chaucer's poetic art must still try to read him in the original. Even though he misses through imperfect mastery many finer shades of meaning, his vision of Chaucer will hardly be more "blurred and fragmentary" than that given in the pages of Mr. Van Wyck.

Apropos of centenaries to be celebrated in 1931 the London *Observer* calls attention to "Calverley (born 1831), who did so much to redeem Victorian literature from the charge of over-seriousness. Contemporary with him were Frederic Harrison, the high-priest of Positivism, who once confessed that he did not recollect ever having changed an opinion in his life; William Hale White, the author of 'The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford,' which has had a certain revival of interest during the past few years; and James Knowles, who founded and edited the *Nineteenth Century*, which, unlike the *Fortnightly*, made concessions in its title in deference to the lapse of time."

Go to the Ant

ANTS. By JULIAN HUXLEY. New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith. 1930. $1.50.

THE LIFE OF THE ANT. By MAURICE MAETERLINCK. New York: John Day Co. 1930. $2.

Reviewed by BEVERLY KUNKEL
Lafayette College

BOOKS on the ants and other social insects have always appealed to large numbers of readers and during the past few years the number which have appeared has been unusually large. Whether the great socialization of life in Russia has anything to do with the increasing interest in the social life of the insects is a question. Julian Huxley's little volume is of special value in that it makes clear the fundamental differences between the social organization of the insects and of man. Among these may be mentioned the fact that some grade of social life has been attained at least twenty-four times in the evolution of the insects, whereas the evolution from non-mammal to mammal has occurred but once. Furthermore, the societies of ants have changed extremely little since the Oligocene while human society has changed profoundly since man's origin, perhaps one one-hundredth of the period of ant life. Finally there may be mentioned the plasticity of human life based largely upon the human power of rapid learning and conceptual thinking which has enabled man to adapt himself to a great variety of circumstances at the same time that he has not changed his structure sufficiently to become more than a single species.

The treatment of the subject in Huxley's book is thoroughly scientific and shows a breadth of knowledge of the subject which appeals to the realist.

"The Life of the Ant," like its predecessors, "The Life of the Bee" and "The Life of the White Ant," owes its preëminence not alone to the accuracy and extent of Mæterlinck's knowledge of these insects, but also to the philosophical interpretation which the author places upon the social life of the insects and of man.

* * *

plexity of the life of the ants in contrast with that of the bees or the termites. The scientist must, of course, agree that there is much in the life of the insects, as in all other natural objects, which transcends our present understanding. Indeed, this volume should be read by every biologist who is inclined to the belief that our knowledge is satisfactory in reference to anything. It is good for the soul or whatever it is which makes us think and act as we do.

It does not seem, however, to be an advance in our thinking to attribute the achievements of the ants to an intelligence surpassing that of man. We might just as reasonably ascribe intelligence to the stomach which is able to digest certain kinds of food by means of enzymes or indeed to the platinum black of the chemical laboratory which hastens chemical reactions in the same way that the digestive enzymes do. But to do so obviously makes intelligence mean anything we want. To say that the whole colony of ants represents a single organism in which the separate ants have the same relation to the whole which the individual cells of a single organism bear to the individual, would seem also to make for confusion of thought since in the latter case there is a demonstrable mechanism for relating the action of the units which involves continuity of substance or nervous continuity or the distribution of hormones in the circulation, while in the ant colony there must be supposed some wholly unknown "complex of electromagnetic, etheric, or psychic relations." Of course these may be discovered some day; but for the present our ignorance is complete. Here and there in the single body of an animal the darkness is penetrated by our knowledge of nervous and harmonic actions.

The mystic may, of course, be right. Who knows? Scientific thinking, however, is hindered by such a philosophy.

These two volumes make extremely fascinating reading and are most stimulating. Whether we fail to grasp the mystic's point of view or not it is eminently good for us to make the attempt and "The Life of the Ant" certainly forces upon us a realization of the impossibility at present of understanding a vast number of formicine actions and habits.

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The Psychological Climate

THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF AMERICAN CULTURE. By THOMAS CUMING HALL. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1930. $3.

THE PURITAN MIND. By HERBERT W. SCHNEIDER. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1930. $3.

CONWAY LETTERS. By MARJORIE HOPE NICOLSON. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1930. $6.

Reviewed by RUFUS M. JONES

HERE are three striking books which deal with an epoch of history that is indissolubly builded into the psychological climate, the mental structure of thoughtful American citizens today. It would not be easy to pick out three books, focussing upon the same epoch, that are more divergent in outlook and point of view. The Puritan has suffered much at the hands of many diagnostics and the tale is not yet fully told. Each reporter reveals himself somewhat more truly than he reveals the character of the men he studies.

Dr. Hall has produced a unique book. He is a scholar of distinction and though he is working here in a new field of research for him, he has mastered his facts and speaks with an air of authority. His conclusions are startling but in the main, I believe, they are sound. He holds the position that John Wyclif and not John Calvin is the "father" of most of the religious ideas that form the background of colonial thought in America. English dissent had its birth in English nationalism and found its leader of genius in Wyclif, who taught that every soul could and must come into God's presence without mediation of either priest or church. Here is the principle which lay behind the leadership of George Fox, of John Wesley, and of General Booth.

* * *

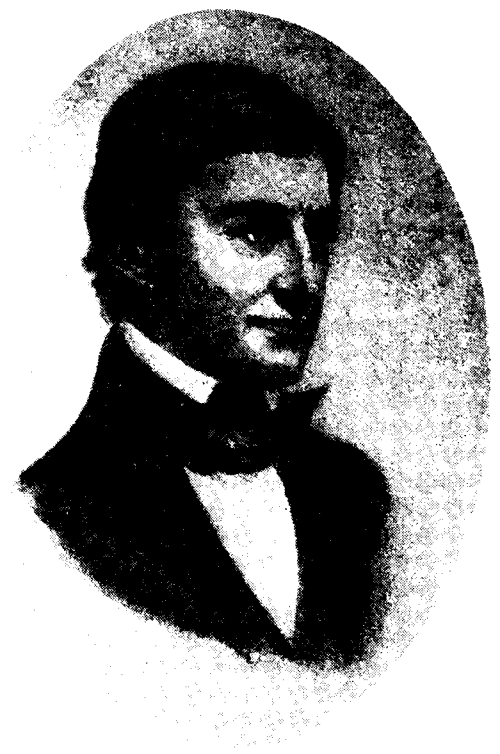
The translation of the Bible and work of Lollard's lay preachers worked a silent popular revolution and at the heart of the movement lay a profound antagonism to the ancient forms of worship and the types of amusement that had come down from the past. The proportion of the English people touched by this early wave of reformation was very huge. Gairdner in his History put it at even half of the entire population. Dr. Hall is more moderate in his estimate, but he gives evidence that the old system of life and thought was profoundly transformed by this popular movement. "The Lollards were typical Englishmen; they were interested in conduct." They lasted in unbroken succession down into the time of Henry VIII and Elizabeth and they formed a solid stock of pre-Reformation Protestantism. Much of what has been attributed to outside influences was indigenous in England and developed from within.

Dr. Hall contends that the dissenting type of English religious thought sprang out of this background. Congregationalism of the Pilgrim Fathers' type goes back, not to Robert Browne nor Henry Barrowe, but to its real father, John Wyclif and the Lollards. The same is true for the powerful stream of the Baptist movements. But the Puritans are another matter. They must not be confused with dissenters and separatists. They represent a high Church wing of the English Protestant movement. Their ideal of Church government was the Presbyterian form and their theology was Calvinist. They raised the Church to the supreme height of importance and they put the minister at the pinnacle of the human social system. Their conception of revelation made it absolute and final.

But it was dissent and not Puritanism that dominated American life and thought. This is Dr. Hall's unique contention. Puritanism had a short reign, either in England or America. It was a brief and passing theory. If Westminster Presbyterianism had captured England it might have dominated America also, but it did neither. The older and more native tradition finally conquered and America became predominantly "separatist" rather than "puritan."

There is no doubt that this interesting book draws the distinction too sharply between the separating bodies and the Puritan Church. But Professor Schneider's "Puritan Mind" makes far too little of the distinction, as do many writers on the history of Colonial New England. He nowhere carefully discriminates the separatist type of mind from the Puritan type. He confuses Pilgrims and Puritans, as though they were part of the same movement. A good deal of the time the author is recording the state of knowledge, the prevailing thought of the times and the emotional tone, and loosely calls it "Puritan." He does no sort of justice to Roger Williams and he takes very little pains to understand what lay behind the contentions of this pure minded "Seeker." He still less understands the mind and spirit of the Quaker "invaders." He gives the number of New England "martyrs" incorrectly and he misses the real reason why persecution stopped in the Bay Colony.

The major weakness which marks the book, as I see it, is the over-emphasis of the social and economic factors in what is called the making of "the Puritan mind." There is throughout a failure to get the inside approach to the religious mind of the period. The intensity of the religious spirit of the time is hardly felt. Puritans are treated as though they looked at life as a modern man looks at it. The martyr fires that lay behind their white hot faith is inadequately visualized. It is seen peculiarly in the failure to understand the immense theological difference which underlay the Quaker and the Puritan. This sentence may be taken as an illustration of the wrong clue: "The mere fact that the disputes with the Quakers became so violent and were conducted with so much hatred is circumstantial evidence that there were underlying social differences." Everywhere in the first chapters of the book I fail to find



EMERSON

Illustration from "Emerson, the Enraptured Yankee," by Régis Michaud (Brentanos).

See page 552.

any real appreciation of the vast variety of types into which the religious movements of the time were divided and I feel that the author remains on the outside and misses the intense caloric which characterizes these seventeenth century faiths. The economic factors were there of course, but something else of importance was there too.

In spite of these points of what seem to me to be lack of historical accuracy, it is in many respects an able and valuable book. There is an excellent chapter on "The Great Awakening" which includes a good study and appraisement of Jonathan Edwards, of his mystical experience and his power as a preacher. The book closes with a chapter on "Ungodly Puritans" which is mainly occupied with Benjamin Franklin and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

"The Conway Letters" is in every way a remarkable volume of over five hundred closely printed pages. Anne, Viscountess Conway (1631-1679), was one of the most remarkable women of her century, gifted with much charm and with a philosophical mind and with the spiritual passion of a great Seeker. She became an intimate friend of Henry More, the poet, scholar, and Cambridge platonist. Nearly half the letters in the book are written by these two correspondents.

After 1670 Francis Murcury van Helmont, the "Scholar Gipsy" enters the story. He becomes physician to Lady Conway who was a lifelong sufferer and from that time on his opinions and theories, his "anatomy of pain," and his cabbalistic studies are much in evidence. After a little time in Ragley Hall, Van Helmont became a Quaker. Then George Fox, Robert Barclay, William Penn, George Keith, and many other prominent Quakers come and go in these interesting pages. The various members of the Conway family filled places of great importance in public life and consequently the Letters touch the political movements of the period as well as almost the entire range of the intellectual life of the last half of that century. Eventually, Lady Conway herself became a Quaker and Lord Conway found his beautiful Hall—one of the most beautiful in England—transformed into a rendez-vous for Quaker preachers and visitors. His wife became "plain" and gave him the speech of "thee and thou" and signed her letters, "Thine affectionately and really," while the husband, though much averse to the change, continued to address his wife, "My dearest deare."

Anne Conway's one book, "Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy," profoundly influenced the great philosopher Leibnitz and this woman, who had only two words, "Quaker Lady," scratched on the cover of her leaden coffin, was directly or indirectly linked up in life with almost every important thinker of her time.

The book is admirably edited and is marked throughout by solid scholarship and excellent taste. There will be too many letters for most readers, but as they touch almost every variety of life and thought in the seventeenth century there should be a corresponding variety of readers. Here, once more, are many influences that helped to produce our psychological climate.

Fire-Fighters

YE OLDE FIRE LADDIES. By HERBERT ASBURY. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1930. $3.50.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

THE first fires in New York, in the good old eighteenth century days when fires were fires, were quenched (if at all) by the united exertions of the populace. Everyone rushed out with buckets, lines were formed under the supervision of fire-wardens, and amid a terrific uproar part of the water was tossed on the flames and most of it on the spectators. Not until 1731 did the march of civilization bring in the fire engine. A Londoner named Richard Newsham had invented one which threw a stream 150 feet in the air, and a New York committee composed of Aldermen Roosevelt, Cruger, and Rutgers imported two from England. Lusty citizens would ply the pumps vigorously, while others emptied buckets into the cistern underneath. But even the best engines were defective. They broke down, they sucked dry, their stream faltered. In [illegible] citizens had a dreadful hour when [illegible] st Trinity took fire, and the engines proved to [illegible] able to reach it; fortunately the church was saved by a few daring men who climbed the steeple from within. After the Revolution new-fangled ideas in fire-fighting came in apace. Leather hose was first used in New York in 1790, enabling the citizens to use the water of the Hudson and East rivers in place of the inadequate wells of Manhattan. In 1822 an ingenious fireman, who had grown tired of helping lug the hose upon his shoulders, built the first hose-cart. Nearly everything that caught fire still burned up, and fires occurred constantly; but the New Yorkers had the consolation of knowing that the best equipment assisted them at the loss of their houses.

Mr. Asbury has written a rambling, gossippy, and extremely entertaining account of all this, and of the exploits of the New York firemen down to the Civil War, with emphasis laid strongly on the human and humorous elements. Early in the nineteenth century the volunteer fire companies became important political and social units. The members received no pay. But they had a rich reward in public prestige, in the joys of special suppers, balls, and like entertainments, in the friendships of ward bosses and other politicians, and in adventure. Their rivalry led to battles which sometimes quite halted the minor business of stopping a conflagration. They indulged themselves in awe-inspiring fire-hats, sometimes so richly embellished with gold and silver that they cost hundreds of dollars each, and in costly decorations and oil-paintings for their engines. They prided themselves on their fists, their oaths, their nicknames, and their emblems; the engine of the Americus Company, of which William M. Tweed was foreman, bore emblazoned on its sides the tiger that was later made symbolic of Tammany Hall.

All the lore of which Mr. Asbury became possessed when he wrote his treatise on the gangs of New York is of value in these pages. Though he hints at scandalous disorders, his general treatment of the fire-laddies is flattering. He tells us something of their street encounters, and their subserviency to the worst political organizations of the time; but he suppresses the darker accusations against them. The truth seems to be that the worst fire companies, with their runners and hangers-on, learned to set fires for the fun of the thing, and spent more time in looting

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the fire-stricken neighborhood than in suppressing the flames. When in 1865 the volunteer companies were abolished, New Yorkers heaved a sigh of relief. Mr. Asbury's loose-jointed narrative, which includes everything from an account of the tea-water pumps to a history of the burning of two negroes at the stake in 1741, is an amusing if not at all important contribution to the social history of the metropolis.

Critics of Different Species

FOUR CONTEMPORARY NOVELISTS. By WILBUR L. CROSS. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1930. $2.

SOME OF US. By JAMES BRANCH CABELL. New York: Robert W. McBride. 1930. $7.50.

NOVELS AND NOVELISTS. By KATHERINE MANSFIELD. Edited by J. MIDDLETON MURRY. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1930.

Reviewed by ARTHUR COLTON

PROFESSOR CROSS, Mr. Cabell, and Katherine Mansfield are critics of different species. These essays of Katherine Mansfield's are hasty book reviews of novels published in 1919 and 1920, and whether Mr. Murry was well advised to collect them need not be discussed. There is always a spark in her writing. Most of the novels she reviews I have never read and shall never read. Between Professor Cross's slow pace and deliberate scrutiny, and Mr. Cabell's minute manner, airy and acid, there is nothing but contrast. Professor Cross is a historian of literature and his four essays are in continuation of his "Development of the English Novel," which was published in 1899 and closed with Kipling. He assumes, with reason, that his four novelists (Conrad, Bennett, Galsworthy, and Wells) are secure of a place in literary history. "Not all the aspects of contemporary civilization appear in these four novelists, but in no other group of writers is there so much." The "not all" might better have been emphasized by "of course," and "English novelists" substituted with advantage for "writers." Mr. Cabell "finds some merit" in ten recent or current American writers, novelists all except one; but he sees the signs of mortality in them all. He suspects them to be all headed for oblivion, or, as selectly phrased, "handsomely ripening toward" it; a "*dizaine*" of meritorious authors proclaimed by admiring optimists and doomed by critical foresight. This probable doom, he says, was first suggested by himself in 1929, but the idea has since "been endorsed in dizzily high circles" and has collected a group of "new disciples gratifying to obtain."

Parenthetically speaking, it is my impression that this seminal idea, suggested by Mr. Cabell in 1929, had been suggested often enough before by many people to whom it did not occur that there was anything original about it. There are always some critics who see enduring distinction in all their favorites, and others to whom everything contemporary looks ephemeral. But a critic who thinks the probable waning of current celebrities his own unique discovery, and that all who happen to think the same are his disciples, is something of an oddity. In the way of further parenthesis, the word *dizaine* might be a useful word if it existed in the English language, but it does not. Mr. Cabell writes noticeably good English when his attitudes and neologies are not too obsessional.

There are various kinds and degrees of being forgotten. Oblivion is relative. Probably as many people read Dickens now as in his lifetime, but not George Eliot. Readers of Mrs. Radcliffe and Matthew Gregory Lewis are few indeed, but still occasional, and they have a place in literary histories. Their oblivion is not absolute. The night that has fallen over old sermons and medieval Latin would seem to be as dark and deep as anything conceivable, but Mr. T. S. Eliot finds solace and inspiration in the sermons of seventeenth century divines, and there are those to whom medieval Latin poetry is not a Ph. D. thesis but a thrill. The name of the man who wrote the "Confessio" is lost, but one can *know* quite a little about him, and the "Confessio" is a poem to make the latest disillusionist sit up and take notice. Some authors never had many readers, but in every generation a few. There are always curious people of individual palate who go poking about the centuries and taking delight in the unconsidered things they pick up. Who reads American humorists of the last century, Sam Slick, Petroleum V. Naseby, and the rest? Mr. Don Seitz both reads them and collects them, and probably is not alone. Our young intelligentsia may assume that no one reads Cooper, Longfellow, Bulwer Lytton, or Marion Crawford, but our public librarians know better. I once knew a college professor to whom the Saxon Cynewulf was as luminous a name as that of Edmund Spenser or John Milton. Literary immortality is like a lit space in the dark, large or merely a speck, bright or dim, steady or unsteady. A large dim space may stand for a man whom, roughly speaking, everybody has heard of and nobody reads except literary historians. A speck of light, bright, constant, but minute, might represent a poem that appears in all the anthologies and flourishes in quotation, while the rest of the author is wholly, or almost, forgotten.

To return to Mr. Cabell, I confess to as small an acquaintance with the novels of Frances Newman and Ellen Glasgow as his is, by confession, with those of Willa Cather, and am content to let that difference of range remain. Mr. Lewis and Mr. Mencken have "made a dent" in their epoch, and the literary histories can hardly forget them as much as a general public will be apt to. Elinor Wylie's verse has interested me more than her fiction, and I have no opinion about the intentions of oblivion toward either. Mr. Cabell dismisses the poets from consideration, "since verse making is no longer a pursuit of the adult-minded." Well, who is adult anyway, and what is the good of it? Is novel writing a pursuit of the adult-minded? His "Manuel" and "Jurgen" look to me like the genuine creations of a mind not too oppressively adult. There is no other American satirist at present so light fingered. He flits as obviously as Mr. Dreiser flounders. His preciosity is decorative in Poictesme, but annoying as a set mannerism, pirouetting by habit. I suspect the intentions of oblivion toward Mr. Anderson and Mr. Hergesheimer are quite different. Mr. Anderson seems to interest Mr. Cabell chiefly because of their common experience with the censor. He interests me for reasons independent of the censor.

And—still apropos of oblivion—future historians of English fiction are not likely to be unacquainted with the work of Professor Cross.

Hell-Bent for Sacrifice

RACHEL MOON. By LORNA REA. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1931. $2.50.

Reviewed by GLADYS GRAHAM

THE differentiating names may be gone but some of those six Mrs. Greens remain pleasantly clear in the minds of the readers of Lorna Rea's first novel. The oldest Mrs. Green, dressing, she will still be there, and the frightful, fawning widow with a child. A book of women that went a little further into feminine psychology than the first corner, where the male lurks. Some of these women had a shallow breadth, some a deep narrowness, but one had more. In six women Lorna Rea caught woman fairly well. Now, in her second novel, she takes up a single woman, and takes her up simply, without the aid of any device of form such as that so successful in the earlier work.

The determined sacrifice of self is usually given short shrift these days both in and out of fiction. The phantom-like, husbandless creature, who moved about quietly a generation ago to the needs or demands of another woman's children, has passed, equally quietly, entirely out of the picture. The unmarried aunt of yesteryear whose whole life was an expiation of her failure to get, or keep alive, a husband, is gone with the snows. When economic opportunity and public opinion gave her an inch, she took her long overdue ell; aunts became people. And people who insisted upon self-sacrifice and martyrdom caught the unpleasantly penetrating attention of Herr Freud of Vienna. When self-abnegation became a symptom rather than a virtue, it lost, quite naturally, its large following. But the few abnegators left, those born to be, become rich material for novelists.

A material, however, that requires a clearly understood and clearly expressed *raison d'être*. A heroine may be given blue eyes and slim hands merely because the author fancies them or because the hero's mother had them and the hero needs a mother-complex to explain the girl's attraction for him. But if a heroine is to have the perverse passion for sacrifice to the extent that Rachel Moon has, it is incumbent upon the author to explain. One does not detour through life over a steep and rocky bypath unless some momentous obstacle has been encountered on the main traveled highway. The person on the bypath is obviously more interesting than the one who travels with the crowd, but part of that interest lies in the causes that brought about the situation.

Nowhere in Lorna Rea's new novel is an adequate cause given for Rachel's being what she is. We meet her as a romantic girl of eighteen, already an extremist in everything, and nothing could be more convincing than her impulsive reaction to the news of her mother's sudden and complete paralysis. She turns her bright face away from life towards the repulsive figure of living death. It seems an extremist's perfect gesture, they have always been prone to rush right into action, but usually they rush right out again. And this is what we expect of Rachel. Nothing that we know of her, her youth, her romanticism, her impulsiveness has sufficiently prepared us for her grim adherence to the bitter course she embraced on the spur of an emotional moment.

Once the arbitrary pattern imposed upon her by the author is accepted, however, Rachel becomes real enough. She has the passion and the stubbornness of a true martyr. For better or for worse—and it is obviously for the worse—she insists upon renunciation. She demands the world's left hand when the right is stretched pleasantly out to her. She has the zeal that puts duty before pleasure, her duty before the pleasure of others. She is hell-bent for sacrifice.

"Six Mrs. Greens" was made up consciously of separate excellencies. The form denied the possibility of continuity of character. "Rachel Moon" has these same qualities, but, in it, because the intent is so different, they become defects. The graciousness of outlook and the stylistic beauty are here, the same short emphatic character sketches are here, but the central thread with which they should all be woven into a whole is not elastic enough for its purpose. All of which is to forget that this is a first novel, even if a second book, for Lorna Rea's work has a toughness of fibre that disdains such factual concessions.

Contrasting Methods

CERTAIN PEOPLE. By EDITH WHARTON. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1930. $2.

IN OUR TIME. By ERNEST HEMINGWAY. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1930. $2.50.

THE first of these books is not the most important of Mrs. Wharton's collections of short stories, but it is certainly proof that her skill does not fail with years. There is one story which deals with the visit of a woman to the house of her dying lover, and her repulse, without revelation on either side, by his jealous sister, that, one is tempted to say, only Mrs. Wharton could have written. Her art is an art of nuances, and nuance is precisely what current fiction, particularly current American fiction of the direct action type, has entirely lost. It is interesting to compare this volume with a reprint just issued of Hemingway's first book, also a collection of stories. The intense vividness of Hemingway's scenes—for example, the return of the youth to his northern fishing river is not matched by anything in Mrs. Wharton, but she gets subtler, if not stronger, facts about human nature, and makes them far more articulate. Where men and women who have been smoothed and refined by special experience are concerned, she is still our most competent artist in fiction. But she has to keep to such material. There are no more "Ethan Fromes." And the episodes of New York journalistic life in her "Hudson River Bracketed" were as weak as her country-house scenes were strong.

Emil Ludwig has just finished a play in which the chief character is the late President Wilson. It is called "Versailles."

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The Bowling Green

John Mistletoe, XXIII.

THERE was another barber-shop episode. In those early days it was a young bachelor's luxury to go out on bright Sunday mornings for a professional shave. There was a comfortable sense of grown-up importance in issuing from one's lodging, walking down the quiet passage of Madison Avenue and through the Sabbath pause of Madison Square on so masculine an errand. Sometimes an elderly gentleman was feeding the pigeons, who flapped and nodded about him with bright ungrateful eyes, like poets about a publisher. There also was the headquarters of the S. P. C. A. to which these young idealists once went in grievance to report the sorrows of a huge turtle, painfully bound and inverted in the window of a 32nd Street chop-house. When they appealed to the innkeeper on the creature's behalf, he insisted that turtles were used to it and liked it. A special officer from the S. P. C. A. accompanied them to the relief of the captive, but probably their interference only hastened its transformation into soup. By the Farragut statue was still a file of hansoms; where he sat not long afterward on a bench, watching the Life Insurance clock until it should be time to take cab to the church to be married. There was an airy and upward and birdlike feeling about the whole Square in the breezy stir of spring; something like that spacious skyey dream Chaucer had in the *House of Fame;* like that dearest of comedians, the boy afterward found it all "shut in the treasury of his brain." Above, like a happy thought in the back of the mind, one was aware of Diana tightening her arrow toward the bluest void; pleasant symbol of the impossible.

But he was on the way to the barber. Later he discovered the Seville Hotel, and it pleased his fancy to patronize the Barber of Seville, but this particular occasion was in the basement of a tonsor on 23rd Street. The chairs were filled with gentlemen peacefully being shaven, shorn, shined and shampooed, when there was a thunderous deeply booming explosion. The shop quivered, lights went out, there was a raining tinkle of broken glass. Brief silence, then shouts, horns, clamor. Was this the long speculated earthquake which would teach New York her lesson of humility? With one accord barbers, manicuristes and customers fled earnestly upstairs to the pavement. From a ragged hole in the street poured a spire of brilliant flame. Men were running, motors and trolley cars anxiously creeping out of danger, a horse was biped with terror. The Gas Company had suffered one of its uterine disorders, there was an unpleasant rumbling underfoot and the feeling that another blast might be imminent. Aproned and lathered as they were, one man bleeding from a slip of the razor, the agitated customers skipped across into the Park. It must have looked like the exhumation of Doomsday, shrouded and fluttering figures bursting from underground, their faces blanched with soap. The first thought was safety, but when the clanging waggoneers had shortly got the better of the emergency came an anxiety for coats and wallets left in the shop. The street was now thronged and guarded; it needed some argument with the cops before these Lazari could win back to the shaken parlor. The barbers' operations were hastily completed by candle-light.

Just so, Mistletoe has sometimes thought afterwards, were a lot of placid Certainties blown from their warm chairs by the explosion of the War. For quite a while they were out in the parks in anxious and unseemly deshabille. A surprising number of them found their way back to the barber shop, but one or two still show a nicked ear where the blade slipped; some others have taken to safety razors.

* * *

Like most college boys, Mistletoe had had a vague notion that the desirable job in a publishing house was "editorial," by which he imagined a safe and dignified billet reading manuscripts. He soon outgrew this juvenile idea. His first job, under rigorous tuition, was the compilation of "Literary Notes," weekly broadsides of press matter sent off to a large mailing list of newspapers and reviewers. The first delicacy he had to study, and was not quick in learning, was the distinction between Opinion and News. Genuine information about books and authors the papers are glad to print, but the attempt to insinuate blurb into unpurchased space is vain. The young man's early attempts to write eloquent press notes must have caused intense suffering to the head of the Publicity Department, an experienced newspaper alumnus. J. M. could always tell when a call-down was coming. He turned in his copy for approval, and from his desk could see his chief examining it. A look of intense quietness would come over Harry Maule's face, he would sink back into meditation and absently begin trimming his nails with a large pair of office shears. This was a sure sign that something was wrong. Harry was endlessly considerate, and would often rewrite the offending piece himself rather than reproach his inexperienced assistant. But his instinct was unerring, and he never failed (quite rightly) to spring upon illegitimate editorializing.

The collecting of data about the house's authors was the pleasantest part of the Publicity job. It involved all sorts of surprising expeditions. One was to a remote livery stable in Brooklyn where by drinking beer with a horse-doctor he secured domestic reminiscences of a deceased Englishman reputed to have been one of those who wrote the novels of "Bertha M. Clay." But the very first author assigned exclusively to young Mistletoe as laboratory material was our well-loved B. F. Mr. F. then had a workroom on 14th Street where he courteously welcomed the green envoy who gazed in affectionate admiration upon his first Practising Author. There they laid the foundations of one of the happiest friendships of a lifetime. B. F. is a man of exceptional modesty, and I hope he will not resent my recalling Mistletoe's small triumph, which he likes to believe unique. He wrote a biographical sketch of B. F. which he sent to the New York *Evening Post*. It was done with so frolicsome a hand that the austere old *Post* did not realize it was really publisher's press matter and actually sent him a check, at then space rates, for $14. B. F. got even many years later, with his disarming grin, by introducing his friend, in person, into one of his admirable detective stories, *The Mystery of the Folded Paper*. Another pleasant episode of that time was when the quixotic Bouck White, learning that his young friends had been united in the rites of the effete Episcopalian church, averred that they were still living in sin and insisted on reading over them the marriage lines of his Church of the Social Revolution. A sad thing to remember is Bouck White's prison term of six months (in 1914) when with almost divine naiveté he attempted to interrupt at Fifth Avenue church service to suggest the discussion of some social wrongs.

* * *

I doubt if any publishing house ever had a promotion instinct more alert for broad effects, though in recent years the young firm of Simon and Schuster has shown extraordinary skill in the dulcet tallyho. The French publisher's signboard for De Goncourt's *La Faustin* in 1881—a painted hoarding 940 and 124 feet high—remains probably the largest single reclame in the history of the trade, as I suppose Jonathan Cape's electric sky-sign for *Babbitt* in London was the most costly. But in humorous ingenuities Garden City was always notably inventive. I wish I could remember who was the astounded employee tricked out in top hat, cutaway, spats, etc—"the latest London mode"—and sent patrolling the financial district in impersonation of "Colonel Ruggles," the valet-hero of *Ruggles of Red Gap*. He was supported by advertisements in the papers announcing that Colonel Ruggles was in town and would have a free copy of the book sent to anyone who recognized and accosted him. A time when fortune played into our hands was when Ex-President Roosevelt, enthusiastic over Tarkington's *Penrod*, allowed himself to be photographed reading the book. By felicitous coincidence, about the same time T. R. had been snapshotted in a railway train, very obviously asleep over another book. This latter photo had appeared in the newspapers. Deleting the title of the rival volume, the two pictures were put side by side on a poster with appropriate legend.

In that democratic and free-for-all outfit there was little time wasted on specialization of functions. The young fuglemen of the Editorial-Advertising-Publicity staff circulated in the mellay, did what they found themselves doing, and did it with their might. They wrote press notes and advertisements, corresponded with reviewers, planned special exhibits for bookstores, touted for MSS and read them until they fell asleep long past midnight, took visitors on tour of inspection through the press and gardens, taught booksellers to play bowls on the lawn when they came out to the annual Peony Party, and collaborated in the preparation of a moving picture film illustrating the processes of book and magazine manufacture. Mistletoe's first experiences as a public lecturer were in taking this film round to high schools in New York City where he spoke while the picture was showing. In remote auditoriums of the Bronx, Staten Island or East New York he would arrive toting his heavy canisters of celluloid, have a bowl of soup in some near-by lunchroom, and then deliver his talk for which the Board of Education paid him $10. He was always glad that these lectures were mostly given in the dark, for those were days of severe frugality and his trousers were not always desirable for public scrutiny. On one such expedition, on the East Side, he discovered Max Maisel's bookstore on Grand Street and bought there a copy of Walt Whitman's Prose. The *Leaves of Grass* he had long been familiar with, but this was his first introduction to the superb *Specimen Days* and *Democratic Vistas* and the 1855 Preface. Walt's prose remains the least appreciated of America's great books, and to see it current in a really legible and inexpensive volume is still one of his earnest ambitions. Once he went as far afield as Sing Sing prison to lecture with the film. By some mistake the reels, sent in advance, had been shown in the mess-hall the night before, so he had the afternoon and evening free to study the life of that tragic place. He met several very interesting men among the inmates, including a notable swindler in the realm of faked de luxe volumes.

* * *

When there was nothing else particular on hand, these young men were sent out to sell "jobs," viz. overstocks of laggard titles, and "Special Schemes." Nowadays there is a fat omnibus book that calls itself the Week-End Library, but we had a Week-End Library back in 1913, a quartet of cheap reprints that included Frank Norris's excellent *McTeague* (I forget the other titles) and Mistletoe spent many an instructive hour drumming these among the buyers for chain stores. The big wholesale houses of Butler Brothers and Charles Broadway Rouss remain affectionately in his memory for they actually bought a few. There has been a lot of palaver [illegible] years about books sold in drug stores; Mist[illegible] an unsuccessful pioneer in this line. His [illegible] get the pharmacy buyers excited about the W[illegible] series were feebly rewarded. Mr. Liggett had not yet taken up literature; Mr. Riker was not interested in reading. In the big drugstore at the corner of Broadway and 34th there was a queer little alcove hidden away up a tiny flight of stairs where the apprentice salesman had to wait anxiously until the buyer would condescend to see him. Or, in some of the big jobbers' warehouses, sitting gloomily on a bench while all the salesmen of more likely goods were called in first, was an admirably chastening experience for a young visionary. He had an Order Book, with carbon sheets and everything, and was very proud of it, but he could have wept to see the meagreness of its entries.

Humiliated or not, he saw clearly that it was in the Trade Department—viz. Sales—that the fun (and emolument) lay, and some natural instinct gravitated him toward that phase of the business. One of his early enthusiasms was the invention of the Booksellers' Blue Book, a little pocket memorandum-diary containing snips of D. P. propaganda hoped to be cathartic and tonic for the dealer. Then there was the great annual adventure of going, in the lively season just before Christmas, to sell books at the famous Old Corner Bookstore in Boston. There for the first time he learned something of the life of the bookseller; and discovered that Traveling Men, those luxurious creatures, actually voyage in Pullman cars. It is a privilege to have known the Old Corner in its former historic quarters on Bromfield Street, and that antique catacomb cellar stockroom where Tommy Tolman and other primitive Christians toiled late into the night. There was a tavern in an adjoining alley where, after the day's work on the floor, one recruited with venison chops and ale, then returned to the shop to arrange a window display for the next morning. To pull the little handle and send the money-carrier singing along the wire up to the cashier was about as much fun as anyone ever has; it was magnificent. He was there ostensibly as a temporary addition to the bookstore staff, but actually of course the sport was to see how many D. P. books he could legitimately sell. The high percentage of Conrad owners in that Athenian neighborhood is at least partly due to the lively efforts

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A Great Public Character

THOSE who have quoted may be forgiven for quoting again a saying of the late Professor Gildersleeve of Johns Hopkins, that the one thing to be done towards meeting the demand for college presidents of the first order is to "improve the breed of archangels." Were a scientific eugenist to act upon this suggestion, I suspect he would begin by selecting the best available specimens of the breed, and in looking for these he could hardly miss the president of Harvard who in forty years not only converted the oldest American institution of higher learning from a small college into a great university but himself filled a place in the community, both local and national, which caused many to look upon him as the foremost citizen of the country. It was through him more than through any other single figure in the field of education that the opportunity of a great college president to become also a great and widely influential citizen received its most conspicuous illustration.

This essay is suggested by the newly published authoritative biography of him by Mr. Henry James.* And the words with which it begins should be considered, and with special reference to the author of this singularly valuable and illuminating book: "Charles W. Eliot was a great believer in 'stocks,' and thought that families whose men and women he had known and watched through four generations supplied him with confirmation of his faith." He would thus have believed in the accredited interpreter of his own monumental character and achievement, the son of a philosopher whose teaching and writing gave a special distinction to the Harvard of Eliot's time, the nephew and grandson of writers whose name he bears to fresh honors that are worthy of it. As Eliot would have believed in him, so may his readers, and in this book of his they will find a rare point of vantage from which to contemplate the qualities that make for leadership in American life and thought, and, more particularly, the far-reaching influences that are capable of spreading from one academic focus into regions of the broadest public concern.

Two years before Eliot assumed the presidency of Harvard, namely, in 1867, James Russell Lowell found, in the appearance of an earlier biography of a president of Harvard—the "Life of Josiah Quincy," by his son Edmund Quincy—the occasion for an admirable article, now accessible in the second volume of his "Literary Essays" under the title, "A Great Public Character." Accessible as it is, there is no reason to believe that many readers of the present-day resort to it, any more than they do to other delightful pages of Lowell, excepting upon some definite historic, critical, or poetic quest. If the world's recognized fulness of a number of things has left small space for Lowell in the current consciousness, certainly his Great Public Character has receded into a past far more remote. If Josiah Quincy's life of more than ninety vigorous years was a life of greater variety than Eliot's, in that it included some years of service as a Federalist die-hard in Congress, as a member of both houses of the Massachusetts Legislature, and as Mayor of Boston in addition to the presidency at Harvard, yet it was fairly comparable, in the personal impression it made upon contemporaries, with the life of Eliot.

Though the time was not ripe for long steps in the direction of the present university, and though Quincy in his sixteen years of office between 1829 and 1845 wrought no such changes in the college as Eliot accomplished in his forty between 1869 and 1909, he carried on the more liberal policies, including some provision of elective studies, which had their beginnings under his predecessor Kirkland—and lost their headway under the five short-term presidents in the twenty years between his retirement and Eliot's installation. If he could have remained in office until Eliot's time the changes introduced by that "boy president" would have seemed less violent. It is, however, in the characteristics of Quincy as a Great Public Character that the likenesses and contrasts between him and Eliot seem particularly worth considering.

Lowell's essay begins with the words: "It is the misfortune of American biography that it must needs be more or less provincial, and that, contrary to what might have been predicted, this quality in it predominates as the country grows larger." In 1867 the provincialism of all things American was manifestly causing Lowell no little distress. "Who shall conjure," he exclaims, "with Saugus or Cato Four Corners—with Israel Putnam or Return Jonathan Meigs?" Of Quincy himself in his ninetieth year he tells a story in which the most provincial of Bostonians must detect a certain pathetic humor: "I have no desire to die," said the old man to Lowell and a friend while visiting him, "but also no reluctance. Indeed, I have a considerable curiosity about the other world. I have never been to Europe, you know." The Great Public Character was in fact a great local character, presiding, while at the head of Harvard, over an institution essentially local. Belonging to the Boston generation that preceded Eliot's, he was yet the product of social, religious, and civic surroundings and influences almost identical with those that helped to mold the younger man. For these and for their effects Lowell, with all his dread of provincialism, had a full appreciation and respect. Because in one passage of his essay the name of the later president of Harvard might with so little detriment to the sense of the passage be substituted for the name of the earlier, it may be read today with both figures in mind:

> In Josiah Quincy we have an example of character trained and shaped, under the nearest approach to a pure democracy the world has ever seen, to a firmness, unity, and self-centred poise that recall the finer types of antiquity, in which the public and private man were so wholly of a piece that they were truly everywhere at home, for the same sincerity of nature that dignified the hearth carried also a charm of homeliness in the forum. The phrase "a great public character," once common, seems to be going out of fashion, perhaps because there are fewer examples of the thing. It fits Josiah Quincy exactly. Active in civic and academic duties beyond the ordinary period of man, at fourscore and ten his pen, voice, and venerable presence were still efficient in public affairs. A score of years after the energies of even vigorous men are declining or spent, his mind and character made themselves felt as at their prime. A true pillar of house and state, he stood unflinchingly upright under whatever burden might be laid upon him.

THERE is obviously more of Eliot here than in Lowell's recalling of Quincy's saying that "if he were imprisoned, and allowed to choose one book for amusement, that should be Horace"; or in his other reminiscence of the Consul Plancus of his college days bowing students out of his study with "Sir, your servant." Yet the likenesses and contrasts which these citations from Lowell have suggested will have served their purpose if in any measure they relate something of Eliot to the scene and the standards of that past now remote in which his character was formed and his opportunities were foreshadowed.

Yet for all the resemblances between these two figures there is one impressive contrast—the contrast, to put it in terms of modern speech, between the amateur and the professional. What was possible before the days of specialization was soon to become, if not impossible, then highly improbable. Quincy took his college presidency, as it were, in the stride of a life of many and varied interests. It was not so much by virtue of being a college president as of touching the interests of his day at a wide variety of points that he became a Great Public Character. Eliot, as one looks back on his whole career, was primarily a college president and the manifold interests of his later days, the activities which went to make him also a Great Public Character, grew, in large measure, out of his presidency of Harvard.

Scientific and utilitarian by natural bent, he seized the opportunity of two early years in Europe, when he might well have felt that his brief teaching experience at Harvard was to be his final relation with the college, to make a first-hand study of the educational methods of European universities. Thus he came at thirty-five to the opportunity surprisingly offered to him as well trained an expert in matters of higher learning and teaching as it would then have been possible to find in America. There were prejudices and narrownesses which years and experience were greatly to mitigate if never wholly to remove. His apprehension and grasp of the practical, the "serviceable"—to use one of his pet words—considerably outweighed any corresponding interest in the beautiful as an end in itself. But in the very nature of his post, granted a readiness to seize its advantages, there were constant occasions for the extension of sympathies and understandings of intellectual and spiritual drifts, represented both by individuals and by communities. In contrast with his aged predecessor wistfully lamenting his never having been to Europe, Eliot owed much to his earlier and later experiences of it, and, soon after retiring from his presidency at seventy-five, made a journey round the world to study the problems of international peace, and to use what he learned for the teaching of others. The provincialism of Lowell's day was a thing of the past.

TO turn all these acquisitions to the best account an element of just such greatness as Eliot possessed was required—a fundamental integrity of character and purpose, a willingness to advance by short steps when long steps were denied, an open mind, and a readiness to learn from all the sources out of which good counsels might conceivably proceed, fearlessness, forthrightness, and a manifest sincerity. To these inner attributes were added the visible advantages of a quietly majestic personality and presence, the voice of a master in persuasion, the perfect adaptation of words, in speech or writing, to the message they would convey. Using these gifts of nature and training, conquering the oppositions and dislikes which so positive a nature as his was sure to arouse, Eliot may be said to have accomplished all his major purposes in college and university administration, save only the acceptance of his belief that three instead of four years should suffice for attaining the Bachelor of Art degree.

The same principle of liberty which he believed essential to the pursuit of knowledge by pupil and teacher was the principle that he sought to apply in dealing with those public questions to which, especially in his later years, he devoted his apparently inexhaustible energies. What other citizen of the country has received such recognition of his powers for the broadest usefulness as Eliot, to whom two successive Presidents of opposing parties, Taft and Wilson, each offered the American ambassadorship in London—with the ambassadorship in Japan thrown in by Wilson? If college presidents needed any stimulus to the highest public service, the example of Eliot would surely afford it.

In his own field of education his name must always be associated with the breaking down of limitations and rigidities in college studies, primarily through the elective system. Resisted at first, the tendency which this process represented is now well known to have been adopted by degrees throughout the land, and to have affected the methods of teaching in all its grades, from the elementary schools, private and public, to the highest ranges of university instruction. In his own day, in his own college, even if this plan of his permitted too many shirkers to seek the easiest way, it quickened the most receptive minds among the students, and assembled a group of scholars, teaching and extending the boundaries of knowledge, so that the most eager searcher in almost any field might find what he was looking for.

For what has come after Eliot at Harvard there is no better figure than that employed by Mr. James—the figure of a ship on a new tack. Every sailor of any boat knows that there are short and long legs, and that, if he keeps his craft pointed well into the wind, he is sure to make repeated gains to windward. From the point at which Harvard last came about, and began a tack on which individual desire and effort towards scholarship are sedulously, and most profitably, cultivated by the broad election of a field of concentration, by the legitimate stimulus of tutors, by reading periods, and now by the closer attrition of mind on mind in daily living, a fresh advance to windward is clearly under way. Yet had it not been for the long gain on the previous tack, with its accumulation of a driving force of men and principles out of which these latest gains have grown, the present and future of Harvard might well look less bright than they do.

It was not until Eliot entered upon his work at Harvard, almost simultaneously with the quickening of a new spirit in matters of advanced education in America, that the financial resources for the expression of that spirit began to become available. New colleges were opened, old colleges were strengthened, and at Johns Hopkins "the university idea" found its embodiment in stimulating forms novel to America. It was a time for experiments and daring

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* LIFE AND LETTERS OF CHARLES W. ELIOT. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1930. 2 vols. $10.

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by M. A. De Wolfe Howe

forward movements, and Eliot was precisely the man to make them. Very much a man of his time and also a pioneer, he was hampered by no fears of what might attend the exploration of new fields. Fortunate will be the university pioneers of the present day if at the end of forty active years so many of their theories will have justified themselves, and more fortunate still if the new plans for which a new time must call shall be seen so often to have their foundations in the purposes and principles for which these pioneers were laboring sixty years before.

So much for the past and for the great beginnings made by Eliot. What does his career suggest with respect to the future, not of the American college, but of the Great Public Character, and of that breed of archangels to which Eliot's relationship can hardly be questioned? If he was a professional, a specialist, all unlike a college president of the first half of the nineteenth century, let it not be forgotten that as his years advanced and the difficult questions on which he did not hesitate to form and utter positive opinions kept increasing in number and diversity, there were many of his fellow-citizens who felt that he was "spreading himself too thin," and disparaged his judgments accordingly. This, however, is a danger to which few others are likely to be exposed, for few indeed must always be those whose physical and mental vigor can continue through so long a span of years as his. What his career does illustrate, almost uniquely, is that the public advantage to be derived from the head of a great university need by no means be confined to academic matters. "A conscientious oracle" is one of the happy terms that Mr. James applies to Eliot, and the answering of all manner of important questions, the guiding of general opinion on the passing topics of his time, may certainly be counted among the functions of a Great Public Character.

FOR a long generation of college bred, or college conscious, Americans without any knowledge of Harvard at close range, Eliot in his own person has symbolized his university more completely than those who have known nothing but Harvard are capable of realizing. From experience of other products of its influences they have probably taken it too much for granted that others would understand that exteriors and interiors are under no necessity of corresponding. Eliot's apparent aloofness and self-sufficiency have accordingly often looked from without very like that something of the "hands off" which observers at a distance have been wont to associate, and not unnaturally, with Harvard and its sons in general. All this, be it observed in passing, relates rather to the traditional than to the actual. In reality it was reserved for those who have known Cambridge and Boston well during Eliot's long occupancy of a considerable arc in the local horizon to learn, without reading it in a book, that the public character was hardly more formidable in private life that many another undemonstrative New Englander, in fact that his consideration for others, whether those whom he needed in his domestic and social relations or those, less near, who needed him, was of a sympathetic quality all too rare. In familiar intercourse he was the best of listeners, as many inveterate askers of questions are not, and possessed a capacity for responsive laughter sometimes as surprising as it was reassuring. It might indeed have been said of him as of his predecessor praised by Lowell that "the public and the private man were so wholly of a piece that they were truly everywhere at home." If Harvard men were in any sense to be measured by him, it is only a pity that his severities were so often mistaken for the whole of him.

It was quite a special soil out of which Eliot grew, quite a special training that fitted him to cope with the enormous task, largely of his own making, that confronted him at thirty-five. Yet the breeding ground of archangels is no limited enclosure, and Great Public Characters, if the country is to go on producing them, must spring from a variety of stocks and surroundings. The seed that lies within the man himself is the force that counts, whatever the planting may have been. As aristocracy is measured in America, Eliot was certainly of its fold. After recording the claim he made for himself as a "birthright Unitarian," Mr. James enumerates the beliefs to which his temper and nurture predisposed him, and places democracy even before utilitarianism and the scientific method. Democracy, indeed, is something in which the Great Public Character of Eliot's time in America was bound to believe, if he was to trace any pattern in the complicated design of our national life. For Eliot, with all his identification with the aristocracy of his time and place, the ideals of democracy, its free field for all and its prizes for the best, were the ideals that animated his total work for university and nation.

If so great and true a democrat as Eliot could grow out of the conditions in which he had his roots, there should be, on the score of theory, no fears for the future. Between theory and practice, however, there is a gap that raises disturbing questions. American society at large is certainly a much more various organism today than it was in the time of Eliot's youth. It might therefore be expected that the structure of a boy's training for citizenship would erect itself upon a broader base of social experience, a wider acquaintance with all sorts and conditions of human beings. As a matter of fact, the boy with inheritances corresponding with those of the youthful Eliot is probably receiving, in a carefully cloistered school, from youths of one restricted class in the community, that pregnant portion of education which is derived from one's contemporaries. To consider but one of Eliot's early influences, the Boston Latin School, a public school, containing boys from households of all degrees of social and financial standing, from the least to the most highly favored, afforded its pupils that very approach to society as a whole which led direct to Eliot's democratic outlook. The loss to the community at large that would result from withholding the richest training for leadership from the very boys to whom it should descend from the generations behind them may be offset by continual gains from the fresh sources of leadership in a country that must always owe much to recruitings from new stocks. From whatever backgrounds the great public characters of future years are to emerge, certain fundamentals, clearly defined in Eliot himself, may be held essential.

Does not the greatness of a public character, after all, bear a definite inverse relation to his preoccupations with himself? The points from which such characters set forth, the demands upon their interest and power, are bound to vary from generation to generation. But a genuine zeal for serving the generation to which each belongs, a genuine suppression of merely personal motives, however subtly disguised, a capacity for seeing large things with a vision of corresponding largeness, and high individual gifts of mind and spirit—these are the elements from which Great Public Characters are as surely to be made in the future as they have been made in the past.

The new life of President Eliot, besides standing in the foremost rank of recent biographical writing, is packed with food for thought concerning both the opportunities and the realizations of leadership in such a democracy as ours. It possesses the further value of revealing in a figure popularly regarded as the embodiment of austerity a vein of tenderness in the most intimate relationships of life that produces, upon minds unprepared for it, something of the effect of a statue come to life. Here, too, is food for thought about the less obvious attributes of a Great Public Character.

* * *

M. A. De Wolfe Howe, author of the foregoing article, has been an overseer of Harvard University since 1925, *and was for many years editor of the* Harvard Alumni Bulletin *and the* Graduates Magazine *after having retired from the editorial staffs of the* Youth's Companion *and the* Atlantic Monthly. *He is the author of a large number of books and has edited among other works "The Letters of Charles Eliot Norton," and "Memoirs of the Harvard Dead in the War against Germany."*

The Men of Wall Street

OUR MYSTERIOUS PANICS, 1830-1930. By Charles Albert Collman. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1931. $2.

Reviewed by Myron M. Strain

HERE is a very notable procession of rogues, adventurers, wreckers—and, to a not inconsiderable number, of builders possessed of more energy than wisdom. For a hundred years, from 1830 to 1930, Mr. Collman traces their march and tells the story of their intrigues, imbroglios, and catastrophies, of their endlessly repeated tragi-comedies, which, like the exploits of Manuel and his descendants, are always the same at bottom, however much details may vary.

It is a fascinating tale, this story of the men who have made America's money "panics," and few current novels excel it in sheer interest. And it is also an exceedingly valuable contribution to the literature of finance. It brushes aside, not without some pungent criticism, all the absurdly solemn obscurantism of our economic theories of cyclical relativity, and traces our "periodic" depressions to a really plausible source—the possession of great economic power by gamblers and adventurers who have no sense whatever of the social obligations that go with it. The trouble, Mr. Collman concludes, is inherent in our peculiarly irrational and irresponsible method of raising capital to finance our industry.

This is refreshingly direct and reasonable. More than that, it is unquestionably a great deal more sound and near to the truth than the Goldberg cartoon-like complications with which most of our economists engage the subject. Mr. Collman's diagnosis, however, deserves more respect than his prescription of Federal regulation of the stock exchanges. Before giving control of our economic machinery into the oily hands of our political imbeciles, I recommend that he undertake a realistic parallel series of the political episides from 1830 to 1930, and then decide whether we should really have been better off if they had been in charge.

"Our Mysterious Panics" is written with an appropriate sense of the authentic drama and comedy of its subject. It is also, in spite of a pervasively nervous manner and occasional "overwriting," the work of a man who is obviously well trained and competent in the craft of letters. On every count it deserves to be widely read.

John Mistletoe

(*Continued from page* 549)

of one young salesman through the Christmas seasons of 1913, 1914, 1915. But occasionally pure enthusiasm overcame all mercantile affiliation, as when for instance that lovely lady in black would come in, looking for a Mosher book. She and Mistletoe would spend I don't know how long turning out the drawers where the Mosher stock was kept and confiding their mutual preferences. Joe Jennings and Dick Fuller, the humorous chancellors of America's most bluestocking bookshop, would sometimes turn a reproachful gaze upon their undisciplined amateur; for the clerk's job during the Christmas Rush (it really was a Rush then) is to satisfy customers promptly; not to encourage them to loiter and litigate the niceties of belles lettres. How much can be learned in a bookstore like the Old Corner; he remembers the tingling thrill with which, early one morning before business had started, he picked up Vachel Lindsay's *General William Booth*, just published by Mitchell Kennerley. That was in 1913. His Old Corner eureka the next year was Emily Dickinson, whose *The Single Hound* was brought out in 1914 by Little, Brown. That book marked the beginning of the rediscovery of the divine Emily, but it took close to fifteen years for it to become general. In the book business you can usually reckon that it takes at least ten years for work of any really subtle quality to become widely known. That is not as regrettable as you might imagine: ten years is a fair mellowing period, and strong work does not easily evaporate.

Christopher Morley.

Henri Gauthier-Villars, French writer, critic, traveler and duelist, died recently at the age of seventy-one. He was the first husband of Colette, with whom he wrote several books. He perhaps was better known by his pseudonym, "Willy." Of the twoscore books by Willy, probably the best known are four that he wrote in collaboration with his famous wife, Colette: "Claudine à l'Ecole," "Claudine à Paris," "Claudine en Menage" and "Claudine s'en va." Not all his works were novels, as for instance his early "Recueil de Sonnets," "Essais sur Mark Twain et sur les Parnassiens," and the later "Bibliographie de Bizet." The last title recalls that he was a music critic. He was noted for his admiration of Wagner.

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Books of Special Interest

Emerson Restudied

EMERSON, THE WISEST AMERICAN. By PHILLIPS RUSSELL. New York: Brentano's. 1929. $5.

EMERSON, THE ENRAPTURED YANKEE. By RÉGIS MICHAUD. New York. Harper & Brothers. 1930. $4.

Reviewed by HARRY HAYDEN CLARK
University of Wisconsin

STATISTICIANS *tell us that even within* the last three years the production of biographies has been doubled, that since 1926 more than twenty-five hundred have appeared, most of which duplicate older biographies. Thus in spite of the existence of critical biographies of Emerson by such distinguished men as Woodberry, Firkins, and Garnett, selling for as little as a dollar and a quarter, Mr. Russell and M. Michaud present us with competing volumes selling for five dollars and four dollars respectively. One may well inquire as to exactly what *these books offer, and whether their offering* is ultimately desirable and sound.

In the first place, neither presents any biographical material which is new and authentic, although M. Michaud seems to have made some rather odd researches. For example, the curious may be happy to know that "Ralph was conceived . . . on an Indian-summer night, flooded with lingering warmth, serenity, beauty, abandon, mirage, when the fields of New England were full of goldenrod and when maple woods were more resplendent than the purple of kings. . . ." M. Michaud is not inclined to under-rate his achievement; "I relate," he asserts, "the spiritual adventures of Emerson. . . . Besides Emerson I have shown his contemporaries, his friends, his country, the United States at the most critical, the most tragical turn of their history—1830-1865; transcendental New England, practical and matter-of-fact America." In proportion, however, as the reader prefers evidence and clean-cut ideas to rhetoric and color and rhapsody, he is apt to be disappointed. Take, for example, the chapters on Transcendentalism— "Idealism Let Loose" and "What Time is It?" If "Emerson did not invent transcendentalism," one wonders who did; although the transcendentalists are finally named in one sentence, the reader may judge from this sample as to how informative the section is:

> For years everything boiled and fermented about him and America was in the birth pangs of an ideal. The mystic wave had not ceased to foam since the arrival of the Pilgrims. . . . There were sudden awakenings; there were attacks of collective hysteria. Jehovah was speaking; lightning flashed on Sinai and, under the breath of the Invisible, souls trembled like leaves in the wind. . . . The soul felt itself free, gushed forth, leaped in the air, fell in trances.

Readers of student examinations have a name for this sort of thing, but M. Michaud calls it reproducing "the movement, the very rhythm of Emerson's life." At any rate, if one disregards content, M. Michaud may be praised for occasional passages of poetic prose which those of romantic taste will doubtless describe as fascinating and dazzling.

Mr. Russell's volume seems to me much better than M. Michaud's, if for no other reason because it contains such an abundance of quotation from Emerson. It is also much better than Mr. Russell's "Franklin, the First Civilized American," which Professor Fay found "rather comical" as a work of scholarship. Even here, in spite of the attention to social and political backgrounds, the intellectual background is very sketchy. One looks in vain, for example, for any exact analysis of Emerson's debt to Puritanism, German transcendentalism, and to such figures as Wordsworth and Coleridge. He begins in the modern way with a picture of how the "friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit" failed to push a calf through a barnyard by its tail, and he concludes with the conviction that "Emerson's teachings were intended for Young America; we explore them in vain for an America that has become plethoric and middle-aged." Apparently the great defect in Emerson is that he was a thinker, a "rationalizer," destitute of unconsciousness and "spontaneity." Mr. Russell deplores the fact that Emerson was obliged to struggle through life without the aid of a school presided over by Bertrand Russell where one could make "an attempt at intellectual achievement and social behavior without damage to emotional spontaneity." While both Mr. Russell and M. Michaud emphasize Emerson's physical frailty as a youth, "so timid and chill," Mr. Russell thinks that the mature Emerson's misunderstood individualism fed the fires of a laissez-faire materialism and the Nietzschean cult of the Superman. Did the gentle idealist motivate the World War? "A rather comic consternation," Mr. Russell thinks, "might have followed had it been pointed out that the German writer owed his inspiration, in part, to the gentleman from Concord."

Let us say at once that both Mr. Russell and M. Michaud have given, within certain somewhat narrow limits, a general interpretation of Emerson's thought which will be useful. In one particular, however, their conclusions regarding the wisdom of "the wisest American" seem somewhat odd. M. Michaud says that "the Divinity School Address" *is* a "pantheistic sermon," and that address" is a "little manual of pantheism." This may sound well until one recognizes that it is supported by paraphrasing Emerson's conclusion in "Nature" about "the eternal distinction between the soul and the world" to read "he announces the eternal youth of the soul and the universe." And Mr. Russell concludes that Emerson's great achievement "was to substitute monism for what had been a crippling dualism in American life and philosophy." Now this monistic interpretation runs counter not only to the views of the most incisive critics of Emerson—P. E. More, Firkins, Foerster, J. S. Harrison, and S. P. Sherman—but also to a considerable body of evidence. Perhaps at times Emerson was tempted toward monsim, but he did not yield for long. One thinks of the passage about "unity in variety" in "Nature" and the light cast on the origins of Emerson's doctrine of the One and the Many in the essay on "Plato" and the "Two cardinal facts. . . . 1. Unity or Identity; and 2. Variety." One recalls the famous "law for man and law for things;" in speaking in the Journals of "the counteraction of the Reason and the Understanding" he concludes, "A clear perception of it is the key to all theology, and a theory of human life. St. Paul marks the distinction by the terms natural man and spiritual man." "The dualism is ever present though variously denominated." If life is in part a flux, a series of sensuous "snow-storms of illusions," when "the cloud lifts a little, there are the gods," or as he says elsewhere, "there is that in us which changes not and which ranks all sensation and states of mind." That is the Over-Soul, a depersonalized Beneficent Tendency, which man is free to coöperate with for his salvation or violate for his destruction. Thus he says we first find "the peace of the morning" when, "instead of identifying ourselves with the work, (the Platonic Many, or nature) we feel that the soul of the Workman (the One, or super-sensuous law) streams through us." He exalts the man who "shall not take counsel of flesh and blood, but shall rely on the Law alive and beautiful which works over our heads and under our feet. Pitiless, it avails itself of our success when we obey it, and of our ruin when we contravene it." Thus it would seem that if Emerson liberates us from bondage to superficial conventions, it is to inculcate a still more rigid obedience to fundamental law. Is not Emerson *essentially* conservative? To be sure, Mr. Russell and M. Michaud refer to these doctrines at times, but in setting Emerson down as a monist they seem to have slighted the central dualism which bred that "cheerfulness and courage" which Arnold pronounced the final outcome of his philosophy, justifying the title "The Wisest American."

Constantin Guys

THE PAINTER OF VICTORIAN LIFE: A Study of Constantin Guys, with an Introduction and a Translation of Baudelaire's "Peintre de la Vie Moderne" by P. G. KONODY. Edited by C. GEOFFREY HOLME. New York: William Edwin Rudge. 1930.

IN the ever-increasing flood of uncritical and unilluminated criticism it is something of an event to come upon a book of art criticism written in a really brilliant style. Mr. Konody has performed a gracious and timely service in giving us the first English translation of Baudelaire's essay on Constantin Guys. Set off with nearly 150 illustrations of Guy's sketches in pen and wash, and bound in a lavender suitable to the epoch of which it treats, this essay, which first appeared in *Le Figaro* in 1863, is now given a dress more worthy of its merits. Mr. Konody's introduction adds but little to what is already known concerning the life of Guys, perhaps rightly. It is fitting, in a way, that we should know no more than the record he has left us in his work and that the privacy of a man so attached to anonymity that he not only never signed a drawing, but even broke with his friend Thackeray when the latter mentioned his name in print, should continue to be respected. It was only under the promise that he would not be referred to by name that Guys allowed Baudelaire to write about him. The critic therefore called him C. G., and C. G. he remains even in the present translation.

It was no doubt largely due to the willingness of the artist to remain unknown that his drawings sold for a few francs not only during his lifetime but well into this century. Only within the last decade has the prophecy of Baudelaire's closing paragraph come true. The sketches of Guys are "recognized as precious archives of civilized life" and as such they are eagerly collected.

"Few men," Baudelaire wrote, "are gifted with the power of seeing; fewer still possess the power of expression." He himself was one of the scant half dozen persons whose keen eyes and quick intelligence recognized that Guys belonged to the chosen few. Ever on the watch for the colorful, the fashionable, and the typical, Guys was able to reproduce from memory the essence of the scenes which had passed before his eyes at Missolonghi, in Turkey, the Crimea, Spain, England, and, above all, Paris. Light on a shining phaeton or on taffeta, the turn of a woman's head, the lift of a horse's hoof, the crack of a dandy's whip, he caught them all. During a long life he turned out a prodigious quantity of sketches of military campaigns, court balls, the theatre, the park, the dance, and the opera. His style changed so little one can date these sketches only by the fashions they record, and even there one treads upon dangerous ground, for he could draw in middle age at the time of Louis Philippe a scene he had witnessed in his youth at the court of Napoleon. From these varied scenes, which consummately give us an epoch of elegance and winning affectation, Baudelaire draws inspiration for an essay unsurpassable in its analysis of the beauty and value of fashion, the fascination of the soldier, and the charm of woman.

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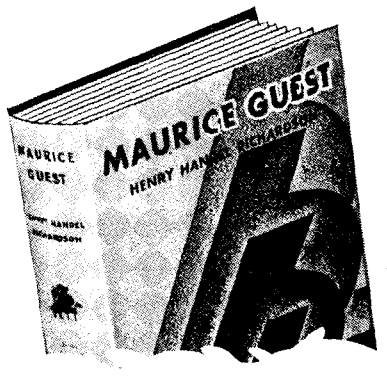

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Round about Parnassus

By WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

IN "THE QUEST OF PAN," Chard Powers Smith begins a trilogy of evolution, to be followed by Jehovah representing the Mind and Brahma representing the Spirit. Pan, of course, represents the body. It is the sort of scheme that leaves us cold, but when we had read a little way in "The Quest" we began to realize how well and vividly Mr. Smith was describing the dawn of man on the earth. Though Mr. Smith has already given us three books, two of verse and one a verse-play, "The Quest of Pan" is a long step ahead for him in the demonstration of powers of imagination and description. The nature of the argument makes the poem pretty prosy at times. It seems to us a mistake to try early in one's career themes of such great significance. It would be well-nigh impossible for anyone to carry out the scheme Mr. Smith has placed before himself and maintain in it a high standard of poetic expression. He develops his idea not in the poet's way but in the prose way, and thereby gains for his presentation the advantage of the directness of prose, though there are few lines and phrases that we remember. Nevertheless, the description is most realistic. Witness:

The beasts' eyes vanish in the shadows. The moon,
Paling from copper into silver, climbs
Higher above the trees, a white bird trailing
Its plumes across the sleeping gods. A trout
Swirls silent ripples. Across the pond two glow-worms
Light their blue, voiceless lamps. A cricket fiddles
Once and is still. A distant dog-bear's roar
Fades in the silver music of the weir
That is the earth breathing. The heavy world
Of the Pliocene, tremendously asleep,
Rolls on unseen among the giant stars.

In The Modern Readers' Series Macmillan & Company have brought out the "SELECTED POEMS OF VACHEL LINDSAY" at a dollar and a quarter. The selections have been made by Hazelton Spencer, Associate Professor of English in Johns Hopkins University. His introduction we can recommend as one of the best things that has been written about Vachel Lindsay to date. And still, since we can be entirely objective about it, we ourself should like a volume of selected Lindsay poems one-half or one-third as large. Just for interest, may we name our choices? They are "The Chinese Nightingale," "I Know all this when Gipsy Fiddles Cyr," "The Flower-Fed Buffaloes," "The Broncho that Would Not be Broken," "The Santa-Fe Trail," "General William Booth," "The Eagle that is Forgotten," "Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan," "The Kallyope Yell," "In Praise of Johnny Appleseed," "Factory Windows Are Always Broken," "The Leaden-Eyed," "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight," "Litany of the Heroes," "Niagara," "The Mysterious Cat," "The Ghost of the Buffaloes," "The Golden Whales of California," "Daniel," "The Congo," "How Samson Bore Away the Gates," "The Booker Washington Trilogy." There you have the important contribution of Lindsay, and a highly distinctive one it is. He has perhaps the most entire originality of any American poet save Whitman and Poe. That is far from saying that he possesses other and perhaps greater gifts. His worst is leagues from his best. He can write more amateurishly than any American poet living. But nobody can equal such things as "The Chinese Nightingale" or "The Kallyope Yell" or the "Daniel" of Lindsay because he invented the form and manner and execution. He follows no known manner. Take "The Santa Fe Trail;" it is in a category entirely by itself in all its effects. It is the only modern poem that approaches modernist music. Lindsay can be imitated but he can have no disciples who are not imitators. The same has been true of Whitman who wished his disciples to destroy him. The greatest he has had have had to destroy him in themselves before they could amount to anything. This salient originality will be Lindsay's greatest claim to fame. He has been the greatest innovator in American poetry since the masters. The experiments of everyone else look puny and half-hearted beside his. We are far from saying that his are the only experiments to be made. But they have a whole-hearted vigor and gusto, the driving force of vital belief behind them that make most modernist experiments look like boudoir and dilletante attempts. Lindsay broke absolutely away from the English tradition. He proceeded to do all the things in his verse that make the Briton shudder. And he did things significant of this country and as valuable documentarily as any of Sinclair Lewis's novels. His poem on Bryan has a whole Thomas Beer "decade" in it, not mauve but cornflower. And his "King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba," if you have ever heard him chant it, is a kind of combined psalter and ballet such as has never been written in the history of verse in English.

In our own opinion Lindsay's best is superb. There is no other adjective for it. Superb in its own way. It would have given Milton apoplexy. Yet Milton to us stands next to Shakespeare as a great poet. Lindsay's worst is pretty bad. But why speak of worsts here? Wordsworth's worst, Browning's worst, Keats's worst—all were pretty terrible. We are not popping Lindsay into the Pantheon. No one for perhaps a hundred years will know just where he belongs. But he is highly significant of the first quarter of the twentieth century.

The Verse Writers Club of Southern California has got out the "ANTHOLOGY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA VERSE." The average of mere versification in it is high and some of the poems quite pleasant, but we could find nothing in particular that really arrested our attention until we came to several sonnets by Leslie Nelson Jennings and so to several poems by Hildergarde Flanner. Now that Genevieve Taggard has so closely asociated herself with the Eastern seaboard we regard Hildegarde Flanner as probably the best woman poet on the Coast. In the last line of "High Stream's End," one definitely remembers her "quail, a delirious jester without a bell," and her "Dawn Poem" has an original beauty.

The Marshal Jones Company of Boston has published "WINE DARK SEA," by Helen von Kolnitz Hyer. Her Carolina and Gullah poems are her best. When she attempts the dramatic she overdoes it, as in the Robert W. Service type of "Granite," and the poem "In the Crevasse." It becomes melodrama. The soliloquies do not convince. The negro poems, however, notably "The Loading Shed," and, even better, "The Cotton Gin Conjurors," have been really felt and observed, and in spite of an uncertain technique, convey an authentic impression. Occasionally, too, she does a good local portrait. In working with native material she is entirely on the right track. What she needs is a larger vocabulary, less tendency toward the melodramatic, and a more exact ear.

"GREY HEATHER," by Sally Bruce Kinsolving, is a little book beautifully made and printed by The Mosher Press of Portland, Maine, but really containing very little of any importance. The level of the verse is dignified but it is no better than much that is written today. We wonder sometimes at the many, many books of verse that pass over our desk in a year and at the competent versification in most of them. Competent versification is never enough. Sometimes we think that if nine-tenths of the poets were condemned for a year to read the work of their contemporaries, good, bad, and indifferent, day after day, they would learn more about what they should do than any amount of writing can seem to teach them. They would begin to realize how many there are who can write up to a certain standard, they would realize how many people use exactly the same words, phrases, ideas, rhythms, rhymes; they would realize how little is shown any real feeling for the texture of language, for what Edward Roland Sill translated as "the clang-tint of words," they would realize how large a majority of the poets goes on and on singing in minor key of the same old emotions. Real emotion is a terrible thing. It either leaves one entirely inarticulate or induces words that run like flames. Real poetry is a matter of extremes. It is a dangerous weapon. It is not a distaff upon which you wind wool with a low, crooning noise. Real knowledge of language is a passion, so that one grows almost literally sick at seeing banal trite words and lazy phrases in print. We are not aiming these shafts at Miss Kinsolving. Her lines are at least more dignified than the average, but the amount of positive violet-tinted drivel we read in a year has wrung our withers momentarily.

Neil Munro, the Scottish author, poet, and journalist, who died recently, first made his reputation with a volume of Celtic tales and sketches entitled "The Lost Pibroch." Among his best known novels were "John Splendid," "Gilian the Dreamer," and "The Daft Days." Several of his books were published under his pseudonym, Hugh Foulis.

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A Letter from Italy

By Samuel Putnam

THE cultivated European may laugh, as he does laugh, at the American book clubs, even though the institution is one which, in one form or another, is slowly but surely invading the Continent; but he really has, after all, little room to laugh, since if he does not have the book club, he has what practically corresponds to it: the literary prize. This latter institution is, of course, to be seen at its most flagrant in France, where it some years ago provided the theme for a ripping and much appreciated comedy; but France is not, by any means, the only country where it exists. And now, in Italy, in addition to the literary prize, we have the "Hundred Best Contemporary Books" (Italian books, needless to state).

The impulse, indeed, to compile selective lists appears to be about as universally taking a one as the crossword puzzle. It may, at its worst, possess about the same value as the crossword puzzle; but in the case of a foreign country, a list of native compilation is not without its points for the observer.

The *Italia Letteraria*, the leading literary newspaper, so to speak, of the peninsula, by way of combatting the prevailing pessimism with regard to the existence of an indigenous body of writing, recently put up to its readers the matter of selecting the "Hundred Best." The resulting selection has the merit of representing, not merely the verdict of a too professional jury, but the popular view. There are certain things to be learned from the list, as arranged in the order of the number of votes received.

In the first place, we are not surprised to find d'Annunzio coming first, with his "Notturno" as the work selected. The unofficial *duce*, it is clear, still holds his place with his countrymen. The young, the *giovani*, may disown him, and serious historians of the contemporary scene may relegate him to the century's crepuscular dawn; but he remains the living Colossus to the book buying public of the Italy of today.

Papini comes second, with the "Storia di Cristo," which English readers know very well. This, again, is not any cause for wonderment. Like d'Annunzio,—and like Croce, so far as that goes,—Papini has been shelved by pronunciamento; but nevertheless, when he chooses to emerge, as he does about once a year (his latest emergence being entitled *Gog*), he finds an audience waiting for him that is second only to that of the histrionic Gabriele.

Massimo Bontempelli, newly created academician, comes ninth in the list, with his "Il Figlio di Due Madre." Pirandello, with his "Sei Personaggi" in Cerca d'Autore ("Six Characters in Search of an Author"), is down to twentieth place. Italo Svevo, known as "the Italian Proust," follows immediately after; his "La Coscienza di Zeno," the book on which he was given his place, is, I believe, available in English. It is rather gratifying to see a writer like Luciano Zuccoli, who may be said to correspond to our own best seller type, coming after both Pirandello and Svevo, in the twenty-second place. Ada Negri, the poet, is No. 29; and Sibilla Aleramo, whose very fine first novel, "Una Donna," was done into English years ago, gets thirty-fifth place with her very bad "Amo, Dunque Sono." G. A. Borgese, author of the war novel, "Rubè" (translated into English), should have been previously mentioned, as the fourth in the list. Marinetti, the ranting father of Futurism, is sixty-third; which may be taken as indicating that Futurism is not so popular as it might be. His work selected is "L'Alcova d'Acciaio." Grazia Deledda, the Nobel Prize winner, is No. 70, with her "Annalena Bilsini." Fabio Tombari, whose novel, "La Vita," was recently awarded the important Premio dei Trenta, is No. 73, with another book, "Tutta Frusaglia;" he is one of the new and significant figures in Italian narrative prose. Signor Mussolini, it is to be noticed, does not appear at all, despite the fact that he assuredly looks upon himself as a writer. Croce, too, is missing. The names of a number of the authors are to be found several times, in various places in the list and in connection with different works.

In the Premio dei Trenta competition, the runners-up for Tombari were: Umberto Fracchia, whose death not long ago caused so widespread a sorrow, with his "La Stella del Nord"; Gino Rocca, with his "Gli Ultimi Furono i Primi," a novel which has had a wide sale and a good deal of publicity; and Mario Viscardini, with his tremendous (from point of bulk) "Giovannino, o la Vita Romantica." Giovanni Commisso's collection of war tales, "Giorni di Guerra," was disqualified; and the jury finally decided in favor of Tombari.

"La Vita" is far from having met with universal critical approval. G. Titta Rosa, for one, the warhorse of *L'Italia Letteraria*, was rather hard upon it; but Signor Rosa is frequently a bit hard on the young. Tombari's is a novel that sets out to be modern at any cost; its author would almost seem to have followed the advice given by one of the characters to the writer hero: "You seem to have it in for literature. That's fine. Write out of contempt: meaningless sentences; words tossed helter-skelter, here and there, in search of a dictionary; much vulgarity. Be a terrible fellow. Keep it up." And Signor Tombari does keep it up. The formula, for it is coming to be seen as such, does not differ greatly with a certain type of "advanced" young writer, whether the author's name be Ilya Ehrenburg, Drieu La Rochelle, Fabio Tombari, or some other. The very escape, in other words, from literature to "life" (which happens to be the title of Signor Tombari's book) has hardened into a recipe. As the caustic critic of *L'Italia Letteraria* points out, it all sounds very unliterary on the surface, but it is all, really, very literary at bottom. The plot of "La Vita" need not be set down here; it runs true to form. Tombari's preceding volume, "Tutta Frusaglia," which is not a novel, is the better one on the whole. The author does possess a gift for description, for landscape; but in the novel, he becomes overlyrical. He is a writer to be watched.

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Among the latest manifestations of literary activity in the peninsula is a new and impressive poetry group at Genoa (something has been said of a Genoan renaissance), centering about an equally impressive poetry bimonthly that is soon to make its appearance—it may be out by the time this letter is in print. Among the writers in the group are to be found Adriano Grande, Eugenio Montale, Giacomo Debenedetti, Camillo Sbarbaro, and a number of others. The new organ is to bear the title, *Circoli*, which has some reference to the more or less unified aims of the poets represented, all of whom are interested, at once, in a certain poetic, almost geometric exactness and in a certain poetic abstraction. The first number of *Circoli*, it is announced, will contain one hundred pages, and will include poetic translations, lyric prose, criticism, and polemics.

The sense of Italo Svevo's importance is steadily growing among young Italian writers. The republication of "Una Vita," which first saw the light in 1893, affords Elio Vittorini an excuse for an extended essay in the December number of *Solaria*. It is significant that Svevo's literary début roughly coincides with that of Valéry and Gide in France. He was an author who for years went against the stream of contemporary writing. He has affinities with Stendhal, which Signor Vittorini brings out. The latter stresses the point that what Svevo is concerned with is serious writing, and that it is this which leads him to disregard the laws of "style" that were accepted at the time he began writing. Vittorini's article is worth looking up.

Italians at the moment are exhibiting a keen interest in Scandinavian literature, the Milanese review, *Il Convegno*, having been practically given over for some time to the northern writers. In this may be seen something of the old attraction of opposites, between the South and the North.

Mistral and Provence constitute another theme of great attractiveness, which serves as a reminder of a volume of studies that is just out, on the relations between Italy and Provence. "Provenza e Italia" includes essays by seven writers. Translations of Mistral are also numerous.

Among the important books of recent date is the "Vita di Dante" of Umberto Cosmo. This comes in the Laterza "Biblioteca di Cultura Moderna," which already has been responsible for the publication of Fiore's "Virgilio" and Turolla'a "Omero." The Cosmo volume is a real contribution, not so much to Dante as to critical method, and it is as the application of a critical method, even if the method be not altogether new, that it is commonly considered. One cannot go into the method here, beyond stating that it lays an especial emphasis upon the biography of Dante's mind, and that, from such a point of view, an apparently arid work like the "Questio de Aqua et Terra"—nothing more than scholastic dogmatism, many would say—assumes a fresh and vivid biographic importance.

Considerable attention has been bestowed in Germany upon Von der Lancken-Wackenitz's "Meine Dreissig Dienstjahre" (Verlag für Kulturpolitik) which recently appeared. Its author was the representative of the German Foreign Office during the occupation of Belgium, and his memoirs contain the full and true account of the shooting of Miss Cavell. The record is said to have been here given in full for the first time to the German people.

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The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Biography

TWENTY-ONE AMERICANS. By NIVEN BUSCH, JR. Doubleday, Doran. 1930. $2.50.

These "profiles of some people famous in our time, together with silly pictures of them drawn by De Miskey," are sprightly, occasionally flippant, accounts of so varied an assortment of prominent Americans as Henry Ford, Fanny Brice, Mr. Zero, the Chanin brothers, Winthrop Ames, Dr. J. F. Erdmann, and fifteen more. By means of graphic physical description, apt anecdote, bits of historical background, and recital of important steps in the career of the "subject" Mr. Busch contrives to present a sharply outlined picture which includes oddities of character as well as of manner and brings out the special ability of the person depicted. To call these crisply written chapters "success stories" would do poor justice to their humor and their irreverence. No small part of their interest is due to their display of the foibles, the ignorance, or other limitations of the very human men and women they run through a kind of verbal "movie." On the whole, they are fair, although some of those photographed might not think so.

LEWIS HENRY MORGAN. By *Bernhard J. Stern.* University of Chicago Press. $2.50.

SENATOR VEST: Champion of the Dog. By *Edwin W. C. French.* Boston: Meador. $1.

SAMUEL MCCHORD CROTHERS. By *Frederick M. Eliot.* Beacon Press. $1.

MOSES MENDELSSOHN. By *H. Walter.* Block. $2.

Education

THE GUIDANCE OF MENTAL GROWTH IN INFANT AND CHILD. By *Arnold Gesell.* Macmillan. $2.25.

MAURIN DES MAURES. By *Jean Aicard.* Edited by *Eliot G. Fay.* Century. $1.25.

PROBLEMS IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY. By *Walter J. Gifford* and *Clyde P. Shorts.* Doubleday, Doran. $3.

NINETEENTH CENTURY FRENCH PROSE. By *Joseph S. Galland* and *Roger Cros.* Century. $2.50.

THE ART OF STUDY. By *T. H. Pear.* Dutton. $1.50.

Fiction

HEROINE OF THE PRAIRIES: A Romance of the Oregon Trail. By SHEBA HARGREAVES. Harper. 1930. $2.

This is an innocent little piece, without appeal to the mature reader. Perhaps some of the good souls who like to absorb a narrative without exercising their intelligence may find Miss Hargreaves's manner and material to their liking. In any case, "Heroine of the Prairies" is quite clean and quite conventional, ending with the lovers' embrace. The scene is the westward trail and Oregon City in the 1840's; the incidents are concerned with the brave girl who rears a foster family in the face of the community's misunderstanding and criticism.

THE TERROR. By M. J. REYNOLDS. Macmillan. 1930. $2.

This tale of the French Revolution has numerous points of merit, though as a whole it is not a book that will be remembered very long after it has been read. Mrs. Reynolds departs noticeably from the ordinary manner of historical novels: she writes briskly, economically, rather than with a leisurely accumulation of detail. "The Terror" is a series of sensational episodes, not a full and balanced record of events. To be sure, from these episodes we get the feeling of the Revolution as, at its most brutal, it affected Paris. Little that might impress us by its horror or its violence is omitted, and everything is seen in a hard, cold light. But as a novel. "The Terror" is without substance and movement; it lacks continuity and suspense.

Many notables of the Revolution appear: Danton, Robespierre, Desmoulins, Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, and Marie Grosholtz, who later became Madame Tussaud. This last personage is important to the story, for it is around her museum in the Palais Royal that the action centers. The slight narrative is concerned with Elise du Bourg, a young aristocrat, who has various adventures while working as an appentice at the waxworks museum. All in all, "The Terror" is a quick sketch, spiritedly done, but held within very narrow limits.

THE OLD MAN. By EUGENE MACLEAN. Coward-McCann. 1930. $2.

A newspaper man may be a realist when he writes for his "sheet." Give him time to write a novel and he exudes romance. That at any rate is the case with Eugene MacLean who has stepped out of a career of journalism to sit quietly down and spin out this tale of newspapers and their folk. It is newspaper life as a boy would like to believe it—the magnetic, world-renowned owner controlling a chain of dailies yet fraternizing with the humblest of his employees; the editor who refuses ownership in the stock as a matter of honor; loyalty to causes and to personalities; the hard-boiled talk, the soft hearts, the general dirty untidiness that we have always been led to believe surround our daily paper. They are all here. Even the owner's son who works for three dollars a week, the newsboy who becomes business manager, and the boy who is a man at fifteen, ordering his "lager." This is not the story that its material would justify, nor is it skilfully written—merely a series of incidents, many of them humorous, most of them sentimental, told from the point of view of a fat, food-loving, dumb but faithful servant of the paper. Yet there is that sparkle of boyishness throughout that will endear it to the middle-aged man fond of reminiscence. Certainly the author had a good time writing it. And there are many who should have the same experience reading it.

TENDER TALONS. By HELEN R. MARTIN. Dodd, Mead. 1930. $2.

Much of this novel is occupied with a sort of modern dress version of the Browning-Barrett courtship. Mrs. Martin, if we are to judge from her own Foreword, thinks of that shining episode as something needing explanation and clarification. The existence of such a need is by no means certain; but if it did exist, one thing is sure, and that is that Mrs. Martin is not the one to fulfil it. "Tender Talons" is heavy-footed and unsubtle; it will be an annoyance to friends of the Brownings. The Foreword, in defence of the book, says this:

> While this is a story of modern American life, the theme of the second half will readily be recognized as reminiscent of an episode in the life of a famous Victorian; an episode in which was involved a sex complex that, seen in the light of present-day Freudian psychoanalysis, may be understood as it was not formerly.

Resisting the temptation to comment upon the dismal jargon in this Foreword, we merely record that few things could interest us less than an amateur analysis of the "sex complex" of the Barretts and the Brownings.

For upwards of a hundred pages Mrs. Martin gives us a rehash of the Pennsylvania-Dutch local color that we have so often had from her before. The manner is unpleasant: thick, heavy strokes; attention to types rather than an interest in individuals; and over all a faintly patronizing air as of the gentry visiting the grateful cottagers. After these preliminary blobs of local color the story changes its tack and sails away towards the "famous Victorian." This shift is confusing to the reader and fatal to the effectiveness of the novel. Obviously, and in spite of the large number of volumes that she has had published, Mrs. Martin is not a genuine novelist. She is, rather, a propagandist for decency, truth, honesty, intelligence, and so on. Her most notable quality as a propagandist is that she is invariably dull and obvious.

But why—why—lug in the poor dear Brownings?

THE GOOD SIR JOHN. By PHOEBE FENWICK GAYE. Liveright. 1930. $2.50.

This book is interesting and valuable, not for what it is, but for what it is not. The more perverse the reader is, the greater will be his pleasure. The work is a pathetic example of what it is to fail in artistic creation.

Miss Gaye has made a fatal mistake in her rendering of the Falstaff theme, which constitutes the basis of her book. The original is a melody that becomes pleasing, only because of its accompaniment: Sir John is foiled against Prince Hal. Harmony usually has this contrast or sympathy, or it is not harmony—not even anything. But the author makes her figure heroic and alone. It is nothing at best. A possible fine development of the Comic Spirit becomes a bathos of inadequacy and injustice. Miss Gaye has changed Hal from a prince to an unconvincing snob, and Falstaff from a fine comic character to a sexless homosexualist. Sir John dies calling for "Harry, Harry" instead of *imagining green pastures*; Miss Gaye has preferred stinking sentimentality to integrity.

Another criticism is derived from observing the author's narrative method. One incident follows another in nice addition, with no bond of unity, except in the fact that

(*Continued on page 558*)

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Points of View

The Bar Sinister

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
SIR:

In a recent paragraph in the Bowling Green, Christopher Morley had occasion to say, "One of the most colorful and exact languages in the world is the technical talk of heraldry." "Colorful" is right and that perhaps is why novelists and reviewers persist in using the expression *the bar sinister* whenever parentage is obscure, and in so doing prove their knowledge of heraldry sinister indeed. Like the old woman with two teeth that didn't hit, they possess two words in their armorial vocabulary that simply won't click. Common as is the term, it was nevertheless disconcerting recently to come smack upon it in the book section of an unusually well edited paper—and right at the head of a column, too.

The expression is absurd; its implication silly. A *bar* in heraldry crosses the shield horizontally—it is never *dexter* (right) or *sinister* (left). A *bend* crosses the field diagonally and is designated as *dexter* when it runs from the upper right to the lower left. *A bend sinister* crosses from upper left to lower right and its use today as a token of bastardy is authorized by the English and the American dictionaries. The *bar sinister* is without doubt a corruption of this correct but unusual term—unusual because the *bend* is practically always *dexter*. Who first made use of the ludicrous form I do not know, though I seem vaguely to recall a novel of that title—which would be quite enough to start, so to speak, the *bar* rolling.

Now while illegitimacy may be a disgrace in these enlightened times, in the age of chivalry it was nothing much to be ashamed of. The son conceived in fervor rather than routine had his distinguishing mark upon his father's arms just as did his more regularly begotten half-brothers. In British Heraldry there are nine distinct marks of cadency for as many sons. The bastard's mark is a *bendlet* or *baton* (a diminuitive of the *bend*), a *bordure-gobone* or *wavy*, a *saltire* or a *wavy pallet*. The point I wish to stress is that the mark was not one of opprobrium but of distinction, of distinction that is for the sake of heraldic clarity—to obviate possibility of confusing in armorial record. Marks of bastardy are, it is true, known as *abatements*, but abatements only as opposed to the direct and legitimate line of succession. A coat of arms in every case is—or was—a symbol of honor. The blots on the 'scutcheon didn't endure, for in case of serious disgrace—treason, cowardice, etc.—the escutcheon, blot and all was promptly destroyed. Many bastard sons bore not only the mark but the name with a capital B. What happened to the daughters so unfortunately born is not so clear; they were no doubt simply absorbed into the general scheme of things.

"How difficult a thing it is to produce forme, out of things shapeless and deformed." Thus old John Gullim in 1632 as he begins his "Display of Heraldrie," little imagining how airily and often the process would be reversed hundreds of years later.

I suggest then, that if writers of book reviews must use somehow the glowering *sinister* they attach to it a *bend* instead of a *bar*. Or else,, fall back on the good old "blot on the 'scutcheon," and let it go at that. If they still insist on saving *the bar sinister* from oblivion it might well be retained, to connote a third-rate speak-easy—in which case there might be some justification for its use. W. S. HALL.

New York.

Mata Hari

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
SIR:

You will infinitely oblige me if you will draw the attention of the American public to the disloyalty of the American author, Thomas Coulton, whose book, "Mata Hari: Courtesan and Spy" (Harper's, 1930), is composed of a series of plagiarisms and who, in order to create confusion with mine (for which I have a copyright) has not hesitated to take the title of my work, "La Vraie Mata Hari, courtisane et espionne."

In content, the two books differ entirely in this sense, that his is a counterfeit of fantasies and legends spread by Ganez Carillo and other romancers, and consequently diffuses anew the lies and calumnies that I have denounced and combatted. All this I have contradicted in my article in the *Mercure de France*, which I enclose. I may add, that in the month of July, the commission, nominated by the *France Amerique* committee, and presided over by the academician, Hanotaux, has indicated to the committee my book, among others, as worthy of American attention.

It would be injurious to me in the United States, if my book, which is the fruit of long researches and a work of more than two years, and which is recognized as the first complete and authentic history of Mata Hari, should be supplanted by a book which, in spite of its pretensions of being truthful, has no documentary or historical value, and bears a title to which it has no right.

CHARLES S. HEYMANS,

Paris.

The article in the Mercure de France *referred to in this letter will be found in I-IX-1930, pp. 464 ff. It concludes with a list of parallel passages cited to prove Major Coulton's verbal dependence upon various French romances and histories, as well as upon M. Heymans's book.*

—THE EDITOR.

"Physics and Platonism"

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
SIR:

A propos of the evidences of the "mathematical theory of nature" which Professor Northrop finds in contemporary thought, the temptation is irresistible to note an effort towards its "articulate expression" in modern musical art. The genius of J. S. Bach exhibited a mind adjusted to grasp the universe in "purely conceptual mathematical terms." His massive tonal structures, vitalized by the predominance always of the musical ideas, lie in the intellectual realm of pure mathematics. Since music functions inevitably in expression of human emotions and experience, it has exposed quite consistently throughout some century and a half of its subsequent history that "perverse tendency of the human mind to think in images." But, sensitive as ever to those subtle variations of the intellectual atmosphere in which it breathes, the musical thought of the present day displays a rare affinity to the peculiar genius of that pure mathematician of music, Bach.

The representative young interpretative artist of today approaches the complexities of Bach as through a medium inherently congenial to his own mental processes. One ventures to conceive that modern creative music—dare we add at its best when stripped of distracting programmatic titles and experimental lapses into realism? —deals, though much of the time a bit too casually, in abstractions of four dimensions at least! This instinctive reaching out, whether conscious or unconscious, toward the sphere of absolute music would seem to be its most significant contribution to artistic progress. For, to the mind adjusted to the comprehension of the abstract musical idea, "percepts and images" fail. "Such things can only be known by reason."

H. H. CURRIER.

Interlaken, New York.

The University of Siena, founded in 1300, has for the second time opened its doors to a group of foreign students.

"I'll Take My Stand"

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

In a recent review of "I'll Take My Stand" Mr. Knickerbocker says: "Important as a vigorous declaration of social protest, it is even more important as a prescription for current economic evils." The relation of its importance seems to me exactly the reverse. In the second part of his review Mr. Knickerbocker himself points out the lack of community among the authors as to how self-sufficient a farm must be to exemplify true agrarianism, and the failure even of those who treat the question in essay rather than eulogy form to admit the connection between the planters of the Old South and the beginnings, in Lancashire, of the very industrial revolution against which they are protesting. These weaknesses, plus the tendency of many of the contributors to face with nothing but a futile hostility the industrialism which is in large measure not only coming to the South but already there or simply to turn their backs upon the regions where it has penetrated as lost territory, and the ideological baselessness of their proffered alliance between the South and the dirt farmer of the Mississippi basin (ought some work to have been done here on the relation between leisure and dirt?) make the book unimportant as far as concrete proposals are concerned.

Where it is important, on the other hand (and therein lies the brilliance of the choice of title), is in its witness to a new intransigeance before the facts of an instrumentalist science. After Mr. Krutch had traced "the devolution from Religion to Art to Document" we had the humanists' defense of values. But their values were either thinly philosophical or else, as notably in the case of Mr. Walter Lippmann, they were values placed from the extraneous position of the spectator. These Southerners participate in the values whereof they speak; they savour as natives the weather-wisdom of the locality from which they come. They are occupied in countersinking roots into the dynamic of America. They will almost certainly have to do some pruning of their original plant once it starts to grow, but their establishment of a position is no less vital for that. It is important for America, not only for American literature, to see the beginning of a consciously valued way of life which has both feet on the ground rather than one hand upon the wheel of progress. HELEN HILL.

Fairfax, Virginia.

An Unwarranted Assumption

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

Mr. Harold S. Davis's letter entitled "Looking Backward" in the issue of January 10th is an intelligent and temperate statement of one attitude to the World War, but it is a militarist attitude and one which is no less specious for being suave. Using Mr. Harlan Hatcher's sentence from the excellent prize-winning essay as his point of departure, Mr. Davis objects to the idea of America's temporary lapse of sanity during the "late great nightmare" and feels that this country engaged in the struggle for definite and deliberate self-saving. The sole question, according to Mr. Davis, is "whether the situation being what it was in April, 1917 —never mind who or what was to blame—, it was expedient for America to stand aside, suffer the Allies to be crushed, and assume the risk of being obliged later to engage single-handed in a contest with a triumphant Germany."

This conclusion is, of course, sheer assumption—and assumption of the most fantastic sort. To say that, had we remained neutral and had the Allies been defeated, we would have had to engage single-handed in a contest with Germany, is to say that, sooner or later, a neutral will have to fight any victor. By such reasoning, Great Britain will have to fight Scandinavia, and America will be facing a triumphant and inimical France. Instead of which, France, for instance, is far more likely to be involved in a conflict with any one of its three late allies.

Mr. Davis should be reminded that America did not enter the war as a measure of expediency alone. America—by which symbolic generality I mean its average credulous citizens—believed it was engaged, not in a duel with the German nation, but in a war to end war (I trust Mr. Davis has not forgotten the antique phrase) and spread the democratic ideal. The war was sold to America on that basis. In view of events subsequent to the shameless treaty of Versailles, it is obvious that it was not only the war, but America which was sold.

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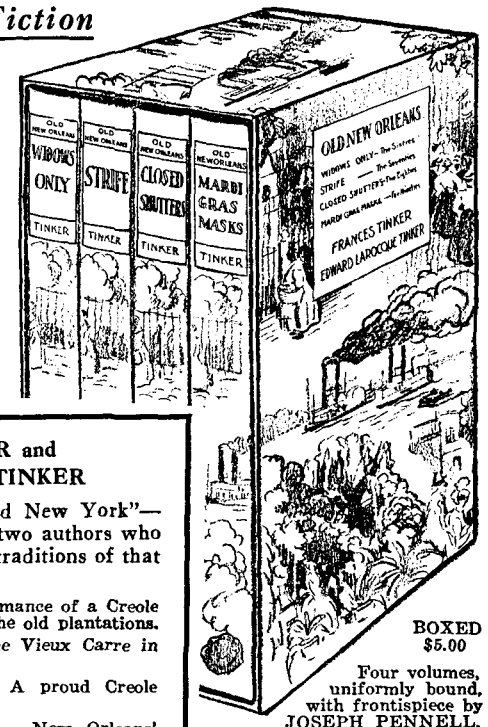

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The Reader's Guide

By MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER c/o *The Saturday Review*

A. P. W., Detroit, Mich., asks if "The Social History of Smoking," by Apperson, really does exist, or if it is a fond figment of Mr. Morley's fancy. "The Social History of Smoking," by G. L. Apperson (Putnam), is a real book, published in 1916; it is now out of print, but no book praised by Mr. Morley is ever permitted to get quite out of reach. *B. B. B., Hueneme, Calif.*, asks for a book on geology, simple and popularly told, for a man greatly gifted in mechanics but with little formal education and likely to be put off by what he would consider "high-brow." "The Earth and its Rhythms," by Charles Schuchert and Clara Levine (Appleton), is the book I give people in like case, and it always suits. This is a simply but not condescendingly told story of geology which really explains and leaves an impulse to go on reading; it is not for children, but not beyond the grasp and interests of intelligent high school students. The pictures are illuminating. *I. A. T., Glendale, Calif.*, asks for a book helpful to a woman trying to make conservative and profitable investments in stocks and bonds. I am told that "Making Money in the Stock Market," by O. D. Foster (Doubleday, Doran) is simple and interesting, and that its clear definitions of terms and processes add to its usefulness as a book for the beginner. Also, its publication date is 1930. "Understanding the Stock Market," by Alliston Cragg (Greenberg), came in 1929. *L. B. C., Montrose, N. Y.* says "Tell B. B. B. to get Halliday and Noble's 'Hows and Whys of Cooking,' published by the University of Chicago Press." *L. R. G., Reader's Adviser of the Boston Public Library*, noticed that I suggested sending to London for a copy of the Simon Report, and tells me of the British Library, 44 Whitehall Street, New York, which acts as agent for the sale of British official publications, a fact of which libraries should make note. *O. J. M., Los Angeles, Calif.*, asks the name of "Commander Lowry's book," lately mentioned in a note on this page as giving the origin of the phrase "Tell it to the marines," and hopes that it is a work on "origins etymological, philogical, or colloquial," for which he is always looking to add to his collection. The book is "Origins of Some Naval Terms and Customs," by R. G. Lowry (Low, three-and-six). Possibly his collection has already "Origins of Popular Superstitions, Customs, and Ceremonies," by J. S. Knowlson (Laurie), and no doubt it is provided with the monumental "English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases: a Historical Dictionary," by George Latimer Apperson (Dutton), whose "Social History of Smoking" is Mr. Morley's friend.

N. F. H., Syracuse, N. Y., is interested in the many references to the character "Jorrocks" made in British conversation and literature, and asks for enlightenment.

IF an American reading public could be brought to enjoy Jorrocks in the spirit in which his British public enjoys him, it would do more for international understanding than a dozen arms conferences. The trouble with conferences is that they so seldom treat of anything important: Americans attend them and then go wreck a morning's work for world peace by speaking tolerantly of cricket at dinner that night, as not a game but a state of mind. Jorrocks could thus be an international ambassador of good feeling, and if you have money enough to get him in the beautiful new edition of "Handley Cross" (Viking), which has an introduction by Siegfried Sassoon, the hunting man, and the original illustrations by John Leech in color, and is well worth its ten dollars, you will have him in the style to which he is accustomed. You may, however, discover his special flavor and quality at an expenditure of no more than eighty cents, for "Jorrocks' Jaunts and Jollities" is in Everyman's. The official edition of the works of Surtees, so to speak, is the magnificent one published by Scribner, ten volumes, subscription only, $120 a set, with the original plates of Leech and Hablot K. Browne, Dickens's illustrator. "Town and Country Papers," "Hunting Tours," "Thoughts on Hunting," and "Young Tom Hall" (Scribner) cost six dollars each, illustrated.

John Jorrocks was the pseudonym of Robert Smith Surtees (1805-1864), an author so resolutely anonymous that he is said to have discontinued a work in process of publication when the publisher permitted his identity to become known. Jorrocks is a "character" in every sense of the word; in one sense he might be called a national character; the fun of "Jaunts and Jollities" (of which Longmans has also a fine edition costing eight dollars) is hunting and sportsman's fun, intensely British and robust, class literature in one of its best types. Longmans also publishes Surtees's "Analysis of the Hunting Field" and Scribner publishes "Robert Smith Surtees" by Surtees himself and E. D. Cumming.

D. B. R., Topeka, Kans., reviewing Bertrand Russell's "Conquest of Happiness" before a reading club, asks for the names of other works dealing with happiness from any viewpoint, psychological, sociological, or ethical.

THE most important book of those appearing in the last few years was the one by Dora Russell, who took it rather more aggressively than her husband, as indicated by the title, "The Right to be Happy" (Harper: afterward Garden City Dollar Books). "The Psychology of Happiness" is by W. B. Pitkin (Simon & Schuster); this is based on cases observed, and will be liked or not according as the reader agrees with the writer as to what happiness may be. "The Science of Happiness," by H. Dearden, was published not long ago by Heinemann, but I have not seen it. "Hedonism and Art," by L. R. Farrell, is one of the little books on large subjects that the Oxford University Press tosses off so neatly. Robert Haven Schauffler, author of "The Joyful Heart" (Houghton Mifflin), collected in "The Poetry Cure" (Dodd, Mead), poems to be taken as food for joy, pills to purge melancholy, and for other psycho-therapeutic purposes, making one of the most unusual and practical small anthologies I know. "The Conquest of Happiness," by Jules Payot (Funk & Wagnalls), emphasizes the importance of the will; "The Quest of Happiness," by Newell Dwight Hillis (Macmillan), is religious in tone, and William Lyon Phelps has contributed to the series of pleasant booklets on various virtues, published by Dutton, an invigorating study, "Happiness." Speaking of Bertrand Russell's book (Liveright), I have received a note from one of my valued scouts, saying "As a conqueress, you don't need it, but I think you'll like the chapter on Impersonal Interests: I do think it would do the wimmen of Ameriky lots of good to read it." This is the same scout who wrote of E. H. Young's "Miss Mole," a story in which the happiness of a middle-aged heroine is involved: "The suspense that E. H. Young creates in that quiet life is beautiful. I could scarcely go to sleep for worrying about her fate. And oh, such delicate touches!" I may add that I have been accustomed, in speaking about this book from the lecture platform, to tell audiences that there is a point in the book when they will feel that they simply could not bear it if, as seems highly probable, things are not going to turn out right for Miss Mole. "I will tell you just one thing about this book," I say. "*They do.*" This does not destroy the suspense; it only makes it possible to read on at something like a decent rate of speed. In like manner, a thoughtful friend told me but one thing about Vicki Baum's play, "Grand Hotel": "You will meet a man in it," she said, "who has heart disease. Well, he doesn't die!" As anyone who has seen this play will agree, I was thereby saved a strain that would have taken my mind off the action. It will likewise support the reader of her novel, on which her play is based, "Grand Hotel" through pages quite as exciting in their own way as the stage version, and as true fiction as that is true theater.

THE poem about "Stand to your glasses" has been identified by *E. D., Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.*, who says it was written by Captain Darling, an English Officer during a cholera epidemic in India, who himself fell a victim to the disease, and that the poem can be found in "Carmina Princetonia," twentieth edition (Schirmer). *M. D. H., Grosse Pointe Village, Mich.*, sends four of the eight stanzas, copied for *E. F. N., Chicago*, who asked for the poem, from the "Fireside Encyclopedia of Poetry," compiled by Henry T. Coates. Here, however, the name is given as Bartholomew Dowling: he wrote "The Battle of Fontenoy," included in the same collection, and died in 1868.

AFRICA VIEW

BY JULIAN HUXLEY

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The New Books

Fiction

(*Continued from page 555*)

there is one character who participates in all the events. Unfortunately, almost the first half of these incidents fail to reveal any developments in the character of Falstaff. Yet they are interesting as an example of how the existence of Falstaff is a means of describing (one must say prettily, although it is irrelevantly) the contemporary village, monastic, rural, city life.

Miss Gaye uses the same technique in writing her dialogue. In other words, her dialogue is resolved into monologue. While she unconsciously and unsuccessfully emulates Browning, however, she fails to have her characters speak as if they lived. She might better have employed the dialogue technique of Hemingway, Connelly, and the classic dramatists. But one must have genius to achieve such a playing-off of one character against another in relevant, concise discourse.

Juvenile

SUSIE SUGARBEET. By MARGARET ASHMUN. Houghton Mifflin. 1930. $2.

In the unusual setting of the sugar beet fields of the west we have one of the perennially favorite stories of the poor little girl who has her dearest wishes come true. Most of us hear of the children of the sugar beet fields as the victims of child labor in one of its hardest forms. It is pleasant to know that there is a brighter side to it, but even in this story we get glimpses of the dark side. Susie and her little brother Karl, the baby, and Mr. and Mrs. Siegefried, are "sugar beeters" who travel about each summer, planting, cultivating, gathering in the sugar beets for the big "company"; here one year, there another year; casual laborers in cities through the winters. How good fortune brought them to the Bolton farm, and how life was changed not only for Susie but for her family, is the story Miss Ashmun tells, and tells well. Her characters are natural, her family is a real family, and the happy ending is real and natural, too. For girls from eight to twelve, though the older sister of fifteen or sixteen will probably borrow the book from the younger sister's shelves.

ROBIN AND TITO. By MABEL L. ROBINSON. Macmillan. 1930. $2.

Robin is a homesick American girl in Sicily, in a village where the Mediterranean lies at one end of the street and a volcano at the other. Tito is a donkey that belongs to a Sicilian girl, and he sleeps in her house, an important member of the family. But in spite of this engaging character, in spite of the romantic setting and an incredible number of adventures, the story is not as interesting as it should be, for the reason that nobody is quite convincing. It is impossible to believe that any one of them, except Tito, would have acted on all occasions precisely as she is said to have done. Miss Robinson apparently enjoyed her drawing of the Scotch nurse; she has given her humor and a kindly insight and sympathy, but not in the same lifetime could one woman be so canny and so stupid. There is an obvious effort to keep exciting events down to an unobjectionably quiet level and "Robin and Tito" leans toward the educational side, a story carefully prepared for girls of ten.

FAMOUS EVENTS IN AMERICAN HISTORY. By INEZ N. MCFEE. Crowell. 1930. $2.

Peace as well as war figures in the score of "famous events" recounted in this volume, which begins with Columbus, Raleigh, and the Pilgrims and ends with Byrd's flights to the Poles. Less common than it ought to be is the inclusion of a chapter entitled "The Story of the United States Constitution." The Boston tea-party and the origin of the Fourth of July one expects, but an account of the making of our fundamental law, although it is as important an event as the winning of independence, is unusual in a book of this kind. Nor does the chapter stop with the work of the Philadelphia convention. It depicts the struggle in the States over the question of whether the document should be adopted or not—an essential part of the greatest episode in our history, the birth of the nation. The narrative is vivid throughout, reflecting the dramatic character of occurrences so different as the battle of the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac* and Edison's invention of the incandescent light.

Miscellaneous

THE HORRORS OF CAYENNE. By *Karl Bartz*. Translated by *Beatrice Marshall*. Smith.

THE BAHA'I WORLD. Vol. III. New York: Baha'i Publishing Committee.

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF HENRY JAMES. By *Cornelia Pulsifer Kelley*. University of Illinois Press. $2.

LITERARY STUDIES. By *Amaranatha Jha*. Allahabad: Indian Press.

SHAKESPEAREAN COMEDY AND OTHER STUDIES. By *Amaranatha Jha*. Allahabad: The Indian Press.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF LIFE BY A MODERNIST FAITH. By *Charles W. Wendte*. Beacon Press. $1.

WASHINGTON. By *George Rothwell Brown*. Norman Publishing Co. $10.

LOVE, MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. By *Judge Louis Harris*. Stratford. $2.50.

MYTHS AND HUNTING STORIES OF THE MANDEN AND HIDATOR SIOUX. Vassar College. $1.10.

A MODERN INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC. By *L. S. Stebbing*. Crowell. $4.50.

GAMES FOR TWO. By *Mrs. Prescott Warren*. Harcourt, Brace. $1.50.

Books Briefly Described

THE LIFE STORY OF KING ALFONSO XIII. By EVELYN GRAHAM. Dodd, Mead. 1930. $5.

A biography of the King of Spain which has the generally laudatory tone of a volume developed about the personality of a reigning monarch and given official sanction by his private secretary.

TESTAMENT OF A CRITIC. By GEORGE JEAN NATHAN. New York. Knopf. 1930.

A characteristic Nathan book, containing epigrams of pith and point with a good deal of miscellaneous theatrical criticism, outspoken, intelligent, sometimes overstated. Suggestive and vigorous, like all of Nathan's books.

TAMBO AND BONES: A History of the American Minstrel Stage. By CARL WITTKE. Duke University Press. 1930. $2.50.

A study of the minstrel show in the United States from the early 1800's to the decline which came at the end of the century.

LATIN WRITERS OF THE FIFTH CENTURY. By ELEANOR SHIPLEY DUCKETT. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1931. $2.50.

A readable and scholarly survey of the literary productions of the fifth century in poetry, Biblical history, and religious and secular prose. The book is written with a historical perspective, and the purpose seems to be to indicate the function of the fifth century in later European culture. Augustine, Jerome, Claudian, Cassian, etc., are discussed against a complete intellectual background.

THE MEANING OF THE GLORIOUS KORAN: Explanatory Translation by MARMADUKE PICKTHALL. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1931.

This translation, which is accompanied by a brief memoir and explanatory notes, is an attempt to render literarily into English, in accord with the spiritual elevation of the original, the whole text of the Koran. Mr. Pickthall is a Muslim and asserts that this is the first time that the Koran has been translated by a believer. He complains that other translations have not done justice to the religious character of the original Arabic. The book has been scrutinized and revised by a scholar whose native tongue is Arabic, and Mr. Pickthall himself is a lifelong student of the Koran.

THOMAS SAY, EARLY AMERICAN NATURALIST. By H. B. WEISS and GRACE M. ZIEGLER. Baltimore: Charles C. Thomas. 1930. $5.

A scholarly biography of an early American naturalist with an interesting background of 18th century Philadelphia and incidental information about life at Owens's New Harmony Community where Say for a while was resident.

THE PLANTERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH: A Study of the American of Colonial Times. By CHARLES EDWARD BANKS. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1930. Limited Edition.

A record of emigration to Boston and the Bay Colony 1620-1640, by passengers and ships.

NOW WE'RE LOGGIN'. By PAUL HOSMER. Portland, Oregon: Metropolitan Press. 1930. $2.

An unpretentious series of narrative essays descriptive of lumbering and the life of loggers. Valuable descriptions of a trade which, for all their informality, are full of detail and color.

THE CHANGING FABRIC OF JAPAN. By CAPTAIN M. D. KENNEDY. New York: Richard R. Smith. 1931. $4.50.

A study of the religious, industrial, social, and political life of contemporary Japan.

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Dealers' Catalogues

THE *months of November and December* are invariably so overcrowded with an accumulation of dealers' catalogues that it is nearly impossible to judge how good or how poor the majority are: a few stand out vividly, while others seem to be deprived automatically of whatever distinction they may originally have possessed. This year held a faint hope that the number might perhaps be less, but instead, more than ever appeared, and more than ever that required attention. Dealers have possibly realized at last that books seldom are sold without effort—that so far as catalogues are concerned, it is quite as important to have decent annotations as it is to have valuable books. Englishmen have always made rather a point of description; Americans have felt that such phrases as "First Edition —Fine copy" were in themselves sufficient bibliographical information. There are in existence too many well-known bibliographies of individual authors to which collectors have access, and too many catalogues of private collections, to excuse the omission of really satisfactory notes.

There have been five catalogues from Maggs: English Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, together with Books on Sports and Pastimes; Bibliotheca Americana, part IX (which includes the second edition of John Eliot's Bible), Cambridge, 1685-1680, £175; Robert Fulton's "Torpedo War," New York, 1810, £15.15; John Josselyn's "New England's Rarities Discovered," London, 1672, £75; Cotton Mather's "Magnalia Christi Americana," London, 1702, £45; and an autograph letter signed from George Washington to John Paul Jones, dated Philadelphia, July 22nd, 1787, £1450; English Literature and History from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century (an exceedingly interesting, even brilliant, catalogue that amounts to a reference book of the utmost importance); Autograph Letters and Historical Documents; and Library Sets of standard authors, with Books on Art, Literature, History, Bibliography, and Printing.

Nothing could be a greater contrast to the dignity and authority of the Maggs lists than the Catalogue Number 3 of the Ulysses Bookshop (20, Bury Street, London, W.C. 1) This is, without exception, one of the worst specimens of bad taste that has ever appeared. Called on the front cover "First Editions (1530-1930) for Students, Collectors, Investors, and Speculators. All offered at prices 'viciously chastened,'" it proceeds to print notes of this kind: "This is the other sentimental baby I've got on my hands —he was born a little later—exactly two months—advertisements in back labelled October, 1896. It's quite a decent issue, although its shine is a *little oxidized and rusty*, otherwise it's in tip-top shape—but anyway its spine holds together much better than the foregoing one, so I think it's about an even break" (for Sir James M. Barrie's "Sentimental Tommy"); and "The author has lived for sixty-three years in one house in Dorchester. That alone entitles him to a peculiar distinction. He's the only writer I ever knew who adores monotony; doing the same thing every day at the same time . . . yet withal, he's the only outright atheist of the three Powys' who write; and still the snob believes that only travel in Cook's carriages 'broaden the intellect.' I believe his net income in twenty-three years of literary labours is $272.19 per annum. Not such a bad record at that—only about one third of a street cleaner and one hundred thousandth of a successful Movie Actor" (for T. F. Powys's "Mark Only"). If it is necessary to introduce a note of jazz into second-hand catalogues, do in heaven's name let it be done by a George Gershwin.

It is a relief to turn to such catalogues as Thomas Thorp's "Books printed before 1640" (number 411 of the Guildford store), Bernard Halliday's English authors of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, and Myer's catalogue 277. These men know how to create interesting, respectable book-lists: their notes give whatever information is necessary, and their books are presented carefully and accurately. From Arthur Rogers has come his customary well-catalogued list; from Dulau a fascinating catalogue of Old Prints and Maps with excellent illustrations and a gorgeous parrot in color on the front cover; from Holland Brothers (21, John Bright Street, Birmingham) a catalogue of nineteenth century English literature; from Bertram Rota and J. D. Miller lists of books by contemporary authors; from Ingpen and Stonehill (37, Museum Street, London, W.C.1) "A Collection of Books Illustrating the History of the English Novel," extraordinarily inclusive and very well done; and from Douglas Cleverdon (18, Charlotte Street, Park Street, Bristol) a list of books of the nineteenth century, introduced by a particularly nice and modest note. There have been also three catalogues from Elkin Mathews who, like Maggs, belongs among the most important of the catalogue makers. The introductions to these lists, some of which have been reprinted in this department, are so sane and so exceptionally good that they are the continual despair of everyone who attempts occasionally to express similar ideas in print.

Mr. Charles J. Sawyer, whose catalogues appear too infrequently, has in his one hundredth list brought together an unusual collection of books. Commencing with a set of first editions of Jane Austen at £245, he offers "Jane Eyre," original cloth, uncut, at £700; the complete holograph manuscript of Cantos 3 and 4 of Byron's "Don Juan" at £2,750; the complete holograph manuscript of Cantos 10, 11, and 12 of the same poem at £6,000; George Chapman's translation of the "Iliads of Homer," London, 1611, at £45; Coleridge's "Sibylline Leaves," London, 1817, at £75; both parts of Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel," London, 1681-82, at £45; Keats's "Poems," London, 1817, at £230; Milton's "Lycidas" (the last poem in a volume called "Justa Edovardo King naufrago ab amicis mœrentibus," Cambridge, 1638) at £1350; Dean Swift's "Tale of a Tub," at £65; and "Observations to be followed for the making of fit roomes to keepe Silk-Wormes in," London, 1620, at £265. The facsimiles and reproductions of title-pages are especially good, and the entire catalogue is excellent.

During the same period the American catalogues have offered nothing unusual. A few of the dealers like James F. Drake, Edgar H. Wells, and Goodspeed, have issued catalogues that have measured consistently up to the standards one has always associated with their work, while other men, Meredith Janvier of Baltimore, Henry Morgan & Company (Colonial House, Montreal), and Carman have sent out good, although not exciting, lists. Charles Scribner's Sons have done a catalogue of "Rare Books, including First Editions" that is notable for its prices: George Eliot, for example, has soared to a pinnacle upon which she must be most uncomfortable—"Felix Holt" is $125, "The Mill on the Floss," $450, and "Silas Marner," $100. Disraeli's "Lothair" which is by no means a scarce book, costs $60, while "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" is $1900. The catalogue itself is, physically, delightful. The Farmington Bookshop catalogue number 4 is quiet and unpretentious and well done. Mr. Maurice L. Firuski has sent out the first catalogue from his Housatonic Bookshop at Salisbury, Connecticut, and has, as usual, been thoroughly intelligent in his work—he is, apparently, the only person who lists any of Emily Dickinson's books.

G. M. T.

The American Art Association—Anderson Galleries has just announced the sale of the B. George Ulizio library. This sale, considered the most important in its field since the notorious Jerome Kern one of two years ago, will take place January 28th, 29th, and 30th, when the works of English authors are to be auctioned. The second part of the collection, consisting of first editions of American authors, will be sold later.

G. M. T.

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The "Limited" Edition

IT is too much to expect of publishers that they will always or indeed often regard their work as a public service. Printing and publishing are now, and have been almost from the first, affairs of the market, made to sell either in answer to an insistent demand or as a gamble. The vice of art for art's sake has not in general had much hold on publishing: the sanity and commonplaceness of making books in quantity for sale at a moderate price has saved printing from preciosity. This in spite of the very evident fact that in the past century, and more especially within the past generation, there have been some books issued as *objets d'art*.

But if book printing and publishing as a whole has been reasonably free from the perversions which have corrupted painting, there is one lesser evil which has beset the trade. This is the misuse for commercial purposes of the limited edition. Not that the limited edition is without warrant. It is entirely proper to issue books in editions which will, presumably, just about meet the expected demand, and if one so wishes, to number each copy. Even the issuance of a few copies on vellum—again endeavoring to guage the probable demand—has something to be said for it. But the printing and publishing of limited editions has gone far beyond this, so far indeed as to constitute a nuisance.

It has become the practice—though it is by no means a practice entirely modern—to issue two or three versions of the same book, and by inserting in some of them a few extra illustrations to artificially enhance the value of such special copies. This is done entirely for commercial purposes, and seems to me a quite unjustifiable procedure. The purchaser of a book, and especially of a new book, is entitled to the whole book, and should not be deprived of some features which are reserved for a limited number of copies. There is an element of snobbery about such a business which it distasteful.

Also, there has grown up a practice among the newer publishers in respect to the numbering which is almost fraudulent. This is the custom of stating in the colophon that a certain definite number of copies has been printed—and then to have extra *unnumbered* copies struck off on the specious plea of "review" or "office" or "over" copies. In one case I know of recently, these surreptitious copies ran to five per cent of the total issue. Such a practice tends to invalidate the colophon: for myself I now doubt any such statement of an edition limit. And what is the state of mind of a purchaser of "one of three hundred copies" who realizes that perhaps as many as twenty-five illegitimate, unnumbered copies are floating about? Even if the book has been bought with the low motive of "holding for a rise" such disregard for the truth is "bad business."

Commercial enterprises have always been subject to fraud, but the book trade ought to be above the petty short-weighting of the corner grocery. If we continue to issue limited editions in two varieties, differing little from each other, with a view to coddling the snob, we shall end by making such editions laughable, as they almost are now. If we continue to belie our colophons we shall breed such distrust in the buyer as will kill the whole "limited edition" racket. The whole matter of limited edition publishing could be put on a higher ethical plane with benefit to everyone.

R.

On Lettering

LETTERING. For Students and Craftsmen. By GRAILY HEWITT. The New Art Library. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. n. d.

THE author of this treatise is the most distinguished calligrapher in England. The present book is the latest hand book on letters and lettering, with a great wealth of illustrative and preceptive material. The chapters treat of the history and materials and methods of manuscript writing, the theory and legibility of letters, the arrangement of a manuscript book, and its decoration. A full index completes the volume.

Emphasis is properly laid on pen forms: the completely designed letters which form the printer's type are not much considered.

It is not likely that this volume will supersede the work of Johnston and Strange—to whom Mr. Hewitt acknowledges his debt—but it will prove a useful and very reliable guide to the manuscript hand. One may question his assertion that letters are decorative: about the only decorative letters which I know are the Arabic. Roman letters certainly are not decorative, but on the contrary are almost always ugly. The manuscript letters are much more often agreeable in themselves. And in the pages of Mr. Hewitt's book are innumerable variations in pen-forms which offer suggestion and incentive to the writer.

One serious fault may be found with the book. It is printed on atrociously thick and cumbersome paper—a quite unnecessary disfigurement.

R.

A County History of Printing

A Brief History of the Printing Press in Washington, Saratoga, and Warren Counties, New York, written by William H. Hill, and printed at the Tory Press by Vrest Orton, has been issued at $6.50. Fifty-four copies only have been issued.

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New York City

THIS week we are going to give all recent correspondents a chance. First we are printing a letter from *Mrs. Isabelle H. Taylor* of Fort Wayne, Indiana. We are once more thrown into a state of confusion by Mrs. Taylor saying that she *did* read "Tom Sawyer" as a *St. Nicholas* serial. That is her honest recollection. Won't somebody on *St. Nicholas* corroborate?

So glad to have you say openly the birthplace of *Kin Hubbard*, which has so long been obscured, whether purposely or not, by his Indianapolis publishers. Having spent considerable time in Bellefontaine some years ago, I became acquainted with his sister and other relatives, and with the background for his humorous characters. Not Brown county, Indiana, but Logan and Champaign counties, in Ohio, furnished him with their originals. *Fawn Lippincut, Constable Newt Plumb, Tel Binkley,* and the *Mootses* are genuine names, and I have had *Pinky Kerr* pointed out to me on the court house square in Bellefontaine. *Tawny Apple* is another. The owners of the names are by no means the characters they appeared, but by common consent "Kin" was indulged in his use of their picturesque names, and no one chuckled more heartily over his quaint quips than they. "McKee's Crick" is a historic little stream flowing into Mad River. *"Cale Fluhart"* is a real person. There is not, I think, a single fictitious name used in any of Abe Martin's sayings. *Coates Kinney*, who wrote "The Rain upon the Roof" in the old hotel in Bellefontaine, was a friend of the Hubbards, and for a time (perhaps always) believed himself the giver of Kin Hubbard's name, though he was mistaken in that, a sister told me.

Incidentally Bellefontaine is the scene in which, under the name of Mackachack, *Brand Whitlock's* recent novel is laid. Mackachack, the name of a tributary of Mad River at West Liberty, Ohio, is a thin disguise, as anyone who knows the traditions of "Possum Run" and has walked at night under the Madriver Avenue elms, will agree.

And by the way, you were right in saying that "Tom Sawyer" was written as a serial for *St. Nicholas*. As a child, in 1874, I read it surreptitiously in that magazine at the house of a playmate, my mother not approving of the same. I have never read it since, in book form, though I have sent it to numerous youngsters, in later life.

Next comes a poem from *E. K. Herron* of Winter Park, Florida, and we feel like sending her or him a consignment of books immediately. Only, if we were to do that, we should have to send the same to all our other correspondents, and the publishers would get on to it and we should lose our job!

Your wail about too many books
Is astonishing past comprehension.
Now if I may help you, I'd like to, Gad
Zooks!
And relieve the congestion and tension.
That Kublai Khan volume concerning my
friend,
Marco Polo, I gladly would care for;
The Grand Duchess Memoirs I'd like to
peruse,
And I dote upon poetry, and therefore
If you will just forward to me C. O. D.
Any books that your shelves can not swallow,
I'll give them a home and affectionate care,
Though domestic disaster should follow.
The cave you propose does not seem to me
safe,
And we can't spare the Phoenix Nest, really,
Which I save for "a last" like the choicest
bonne bouche;
So your premature sepulture clearly
Would sadden our Saturdays, add to the
woes
Of the long, idle hours of the nation.
O yes—and that Universe Mystery book
Would delight me like all of creation.

We are awfully fond of *Peggy Bacon's* drawings and she has just done a delightful children's book of stories entitled "The Terrible Nuisance," both writing and illustrating it herself. It is dedicated to the children of Cross River. . . .

Also a popular edition of "New Songs for New Voices," edited by *Louis Untermeyer* and *Clara and David Mannes* is embellished by more of Peggy Bacon's pen and ink drawings. This popular edition sells for two dollars and a half, and among the songs that are set to music are some by *Edna St. Vincent Millay, Elinor Wylie, Walter de la Mare, Carl Sandburg*, and *Humbert Wolfe*. . . .

Longmans, Green announces the fourth annual Playwriting Contest conducted by the Drama League of America and the Play Department of Longmans, Green & Co. The judges for full-length plays will be *Walter Prichard Eaton, Stuart Walker*, and *Arthur Edwin Krows*. There are arrangements made for the publication of full-length plays, one-act plays, and religious plays. Comedies are desired. For full details address the Play Department, Longmans, Green & Company, 55 Fifth Avenue, New York City. . . .

We see that *Dorothy Parker* is to write short stories for the *Cosmopolitan*—which is, of course, nonsense. What has actually happened is that the *Cosmopolitan* has purchased some stories from Dorothy Parker, quite a different pair of shoes. . . .

Mrs. Antoinette Burgess writes to say that we got the name wrong of that fine English Shakespearian actor she told us about. It's *Gielgud*.

Ivan Swift has called our attention to the fact that in a recent poem of *Harold Vinal's* which the *Saturday Review* published on its first page, the word "beeches" meaning trees was spelt "beaches" meaning, well, beaches. We apologize on behalf of the *Review* to Mr. Vinal. . . .

Mrs. John Hutchinson of Canaan, N. Y., sends us the following letter which should be of interest to our older readers:

Occasionally I write a bit of local history of general interest. Near my home is the former home of the grandfather of Susan Warner and her less well-known sister Anna.

Susan Warner, author of "The Wide, Wide World" and "Queechy," spent the summers in Canaan at the home of her grandparents and gathered material and inspiration for her books amid these surroundings.

The young folks of a generation ago all read and wept over the numerous tearful incidents in "The Wide, Wide World." It was translated into, probably, more foreign languages than any other book of fiction of the time except "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and the latter exploited a great cause while Miss Warner's had to stand or fall on pure literary merit. She may have cried too much but none can deny she blazed a new trail in literary effort.

Anna Warner wrote a number of familiar hymns, among which "One Day's More Work for Jesus" is the best known. As the Warners' home was in Constitution across from West Point, they taught a Bible class of cadets and these got permission to have military funerals for each, and the sisters rest side by side in the West Point cemetery. Colonels, once members of their Sunday School class, returned to be pall-bearers.

Another well-known writer died here in comparative obscurity a few weeks since, *Laura Hallowell Langford*. I think you will recall her.

As a matter of fact, we do not recall the work of *Laura Hallowell Langford*, and will be glad to have word from any reader who can tell us of its nature and merit. . . .

The Poetry Society of America will hold its twenty-first annual dinner at The Park Lane on January 29th. *William Griffith* is now President of the Society. Some of the speaker-guests are listed as being *"AE," Henry Seidel Canby, Mrs. Dwight W. Morrow, Florence Ayscough, Dorothy Parker, and Ruth St. Denis*. . . .

Book news is about to become the feature of a new radio broadcast over WJZ of the National Broadcasting Company. Beginning February 4, at 5 p.m., *Clifton Fadiman*, editor for Simon & Schuster, will every Wednesday devote a fifteen minute period to a discussion of the latest books with sidelights on their authors and their background. It is to be called "The Bookman of the Air," and the Bookman is pledged to single out from the avalanche of books that come crashing weekly from the press, three or four which his critical opinion can honestly recommend to those interested in good reading. . . .

Francis Dover of New York City writes us as follows:

I am glad to see your remarks about "The Mysterious Universe." I have an idea that I know one reason why the book is a best seller in England. This is it: In England, the Cambridge University Press publishes the book for 3s 6d, which is eighty-five cents. Over here, Macmillan's publish the same book for two dollars and a quarter. To be sure, the Macmillan edition contains a few illustrations, but are these worth one dollar and forty cents? I hardly think so.

Addio! THE PHOENICIAN.

The AMEN CORNER

An exhibition of books issued by the Oxford University Press, from 1468 to the present, has been assembled for Bumpus's, the famous London book shop, to inaugurate their new extension in the Old Court House of St. Marylebone. At the opening, Sir Henry Hadow referred to the incalculable debt which is owed to the Press for its extraordinary number of standard books on almost every conceivable subject.

It occurred to us that it would be both interesting and worth while to explore the library at 114 Fifth Avenue with a definite plan, and to outline some reading courses on single subjects, taking a single book as our "Book of the Week," as it were.

Since charity begins, notoriously, at home, and the alphabet with "A," Americana seems to be a good starting-point. The one book under this heading which nobody should fail to read is *The Growth of the American Republic*, by Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager. We have read every word of this book three times and should like to read it again. James Truslow Adams writes in the Nation: "I know of no other one-volume history of 1760-1917 in which the reader will find so much narrative of actual fact and so much philosophical interpretation, clothed in so delightful a style, as he will in this book." The book deals with every phase of American life,—literature, social life, diplomacy,—as well as the more usual questions of politics and war, and the bibliography, as Mr. Adams remarks, is unusually good.

If you wish to go back and trace the development of American political institutions from their source, the book to read is *A Constitutional History of the First British Empire*, i. e., to the loss of the American Colonies, by Arthur Berriedale Keith.[1] This contains chapters on the political development of each of the principal American Colonies.

For the period immediately after the establishment of the present Constitution there are the travel letters of James Fenimore Cooper, of which Mr. Robert E. Spiller has edited two volumes: *I. France, II. England*.[2] Criticising as he did his own country as well as those he visited, Cooper throws a most interesting side-light on American life, as well as on contemporary European opinion of the budding republic. It is a book for the student of literature as much as for the historian. Primarily for the American littérateur is the new volume in the *World's Classics* (No. 354), *American Critical Essays*, edited by Norman Foerster,[3] and ranging from Poe to Mr. Van Wyck Brooks. Standard works by American authors can be found in the same series and in the Oxford Standard Authors.[4] Nor need we mention the *Oxford Book of American Verse*, edited by Bliss Carman.[5]

To return to the historical field, we must not overlook *Leif Eriksson: Discoverer of America, A.D.* 1003, by Edward F. Gray.[6] In this book, Mr. Gray, who is British Consul General at Boston, seems pretty well to have established the identity of the scene of the Vinland Voyages with the part of the New England coast around Martha's Vineyard. It is a beautifully illustrated volume and one which carries conviction. As Harry Hansen wrote in the *New York World:* "He has written a story that compels reading, and has made the Icelandic legends seem an integral part of the history of this continent."

Of the eight chapters of R. H. Wilenski's *A Miniature History of Art*,[7] one, written by Mr. Edward Alden Jewell, deals exclusively with American Art. Mr. C. H. Maxson's *Citizenship*,[8] while treating of the historical, theoretical, and international aspects of the subject, approaches the question from the present-day American viewpoint, discussing especially the problems of the Oriental, the Indian, and the Negro. He also goes thoroughly into a question which troubles Americans in general far too little, the status of the dependencies of the United States.

Last, but not least, Dr. Abraham Flexner's *Universities: American, English, German*,[9] which has been called a great many things since its publication (a second edition was required within less than a month) has been called by Professor Albert Guerard, writing in the *New York Herald Tribune Books*, "a searching discussion of Americanism." It is a book, says the *Book Review*, which "must be read by everyone who follows the American scene."

THE OXONIAN.

The Book of the Week: The Growth of the American Republic, by Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager. $6.00.
(1) $7.00. (2) $3.50 each. (3) 80c. (4) Write for lists of the *World's Classics* and the *Oxford Standard Authors*. (5) $3.75. India paper $4.25. (6) $7.50. (7) $2.00. (8) $3.50. (9) $3.50.

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